Comprehensive History of Orissa

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SHOUT
SHARE
IT

Samudravasane devi parvatastanamaṇḍale ।
Viṣṇupatni namastubham pādasparśa kṣamasvame ॥

dedicated
to the sacred feet
of
my parents

PREFACE

The present work embodies my humble attempt to trace the historical geography and political-cultural history of South Kośala in the sixth and seventh centuries of the Christian era. Many distinguished historians have trodden the history of this part of India but much remained to offer me ample scope for study. A close study of the literary, epigraphic, numismatic and archaeological evidences of the period enabled me to reach new conclusions. I have carefully gone through the writings of my illustrious predecessors and judged their conclusions afresh in the above lights, sometimes I have accepted their views while at times I have differed from them.

In the successful completion of the present work I am greatly indebted to Dr. N. K. Sahu, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., then Professor and Head of the P. G. Deptt. of History, and later Vice-chancellor of the Sambalpur University, and at present Archaeological Adviser to the Govt. of Orissa, and Late Dr. S. C. Behera, M.A., Ph.D. then Professor and Head of the Deptt. of History, Sambalpur University for their encouragement and guidance. During my studies on the topic they were my perennial source of inspiration. My most sincere thanks are due to Dr. K. D. Bajpai, Retired Professor of History, Sagar University, Dr. L. Gopal, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., Professor and Head of the Deptt. of History and Culture B.H.U., Dr. U. Thakur, Professor of History, University of Magadh for their valid suggestions. I extend sincere thanks to Dr. J. K. Sahu, Reader in History, Govt. College, Anugul for his invaluable criticisms. I am equally thankful to Sri J. P. Singh Deo, Yuvaraja of Khariar who was in closest touch with me during my studies on the topic. It will be an act of injustice on my part to forget the co-operation of my wife Mrs. Dhanesh Tiwari, M.A., B.Ed. who took keen interests towards the preparation of the Index. Last but not the least I express my deep sense of gratitude to those scholars whose pioneering contributions on the subject

enriched the scope of my work. Finally I feel thankful to Sri S. K. Bhattacharyya, Proprietor, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta who took up the publication of this work.

I am perfectly and painfully aware of the various short comings of my work for which I crave the indulgence of scholars.

The 4, October
Dussehra
1984

SAMBHU PRASAD TIWARI

ABBREVIATIONS

AGI	Ancient Geography of India.
ASI	Archaeological Survey of India.
ASWI	Archaeological Survey of Western India.
AHIG	A History of the Imperial Guptas.
ASIR	Archaeological Survey of India Reports.
AIHT	Ancient Indian Historical Traditions.
ASR	Archaeological Survey Reports.
ACS	Antiquities of Chamba State.
BO	Buddhism in Orissa.
BRWW	Buddhist Records of Western World.
BODG	Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteer.
Br.P	Brahma Purāṇa.
Bmd.	Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa.
CA	The Classical Age.
CII	Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.
EI	Epigraphia Indica.
EHD	Economic History of Deccan.
GAII	Geography in Ancient Indian Inscriptions.
HSG	Haridās Sanskrit Granthamālā.
HIG	History of Imperial Guptas.
HAD	History of Ancient Deccan.
HC	Harsha Charita.
HSI	A History of South India.
HEDA	History of Early Dynasties of Āndhradeśa.
IA	Indian Antiquary.
IEG	Indian Epigraphic Glossary.
IO	Inscriptions of Orissa.
ICIB	Inscriptions of Central India and Berar.
IHQ	Indian Historical Quarterly.
JESI	Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India.
JNSR	Journal of Numismatic Society and Research.

JAHRS	Journal of Andhra Historical Society of Research.
JNSI	Journal of Numismatic Society of India.
JRAS	Journal of Royal Asiatic Society.
JRS	Journal of Royal Society.
JKHRS	Journal of Kalinga Historical Research Society.
JBORS	Journal of Bihar Orissa Research Society.
JASB	Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal.
JBBRS	Journal of Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society.
KA	Kautilyas' Arthaśāstra.
NAHO	New Aspects of History of Orissa.
Mbh.	Mahābhārata.
MS	Manu Smriti.
NNM	Numismatic Notes and Monographs.
NS	Numismatic Supplement.
NIA	New Indian Antiquary.
NPP	Nāgarī Pracharinī Patrikā.
OJI	Oṛiyā Jātira Itihāsa.
OHRJ	Orissa Historical Research Journal.
POC	Proceedings of Oriental Conference.
Padma.	Padma Purāṇa.
PGP	Post-Gupta Polity.
PHAI	Political History of Ancient India.
PP	Prāchya Pratibhā.
Proc. O.H.C.J	Proceedings of Orissa History Congress Journal.
Pro. IHC	Proceedings of Indian History Congress.
SE	Studies in Epigraphy.
Sabha.	Sabhā Parva.
SS	Successors of the Sāta Vāhanas.
Sel. Ins.	Select Inscriptions.
St. Ind	Studies in Indology.
SII	South Indian Inscriptions.
SGAI	State and Government in Ancient India.
THW	Travels of Hiuen-Tsang—Watters.
UUHO	Utkal University History of Orissa.
UL	Utkīṛn Lekh.
USS	Utkal Sāhitya Samāja,

Vana.	Vana Parva.
Vishnu.	Vishnu Purāṇa.
VP	Vāyu Purāṇa.
Yajna.	Yājnavalkya Smriti.

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Fig. 1

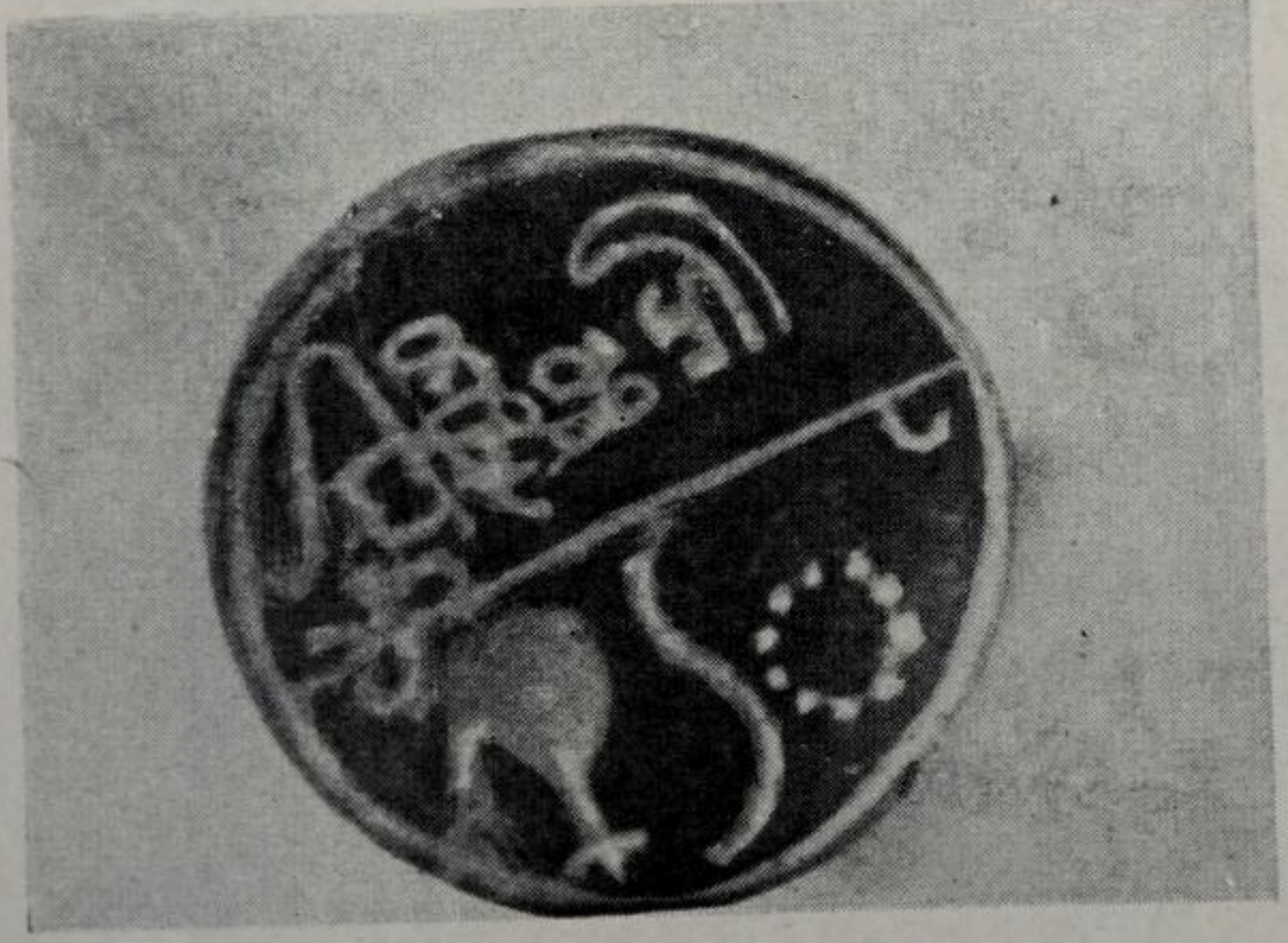

Fig. 2

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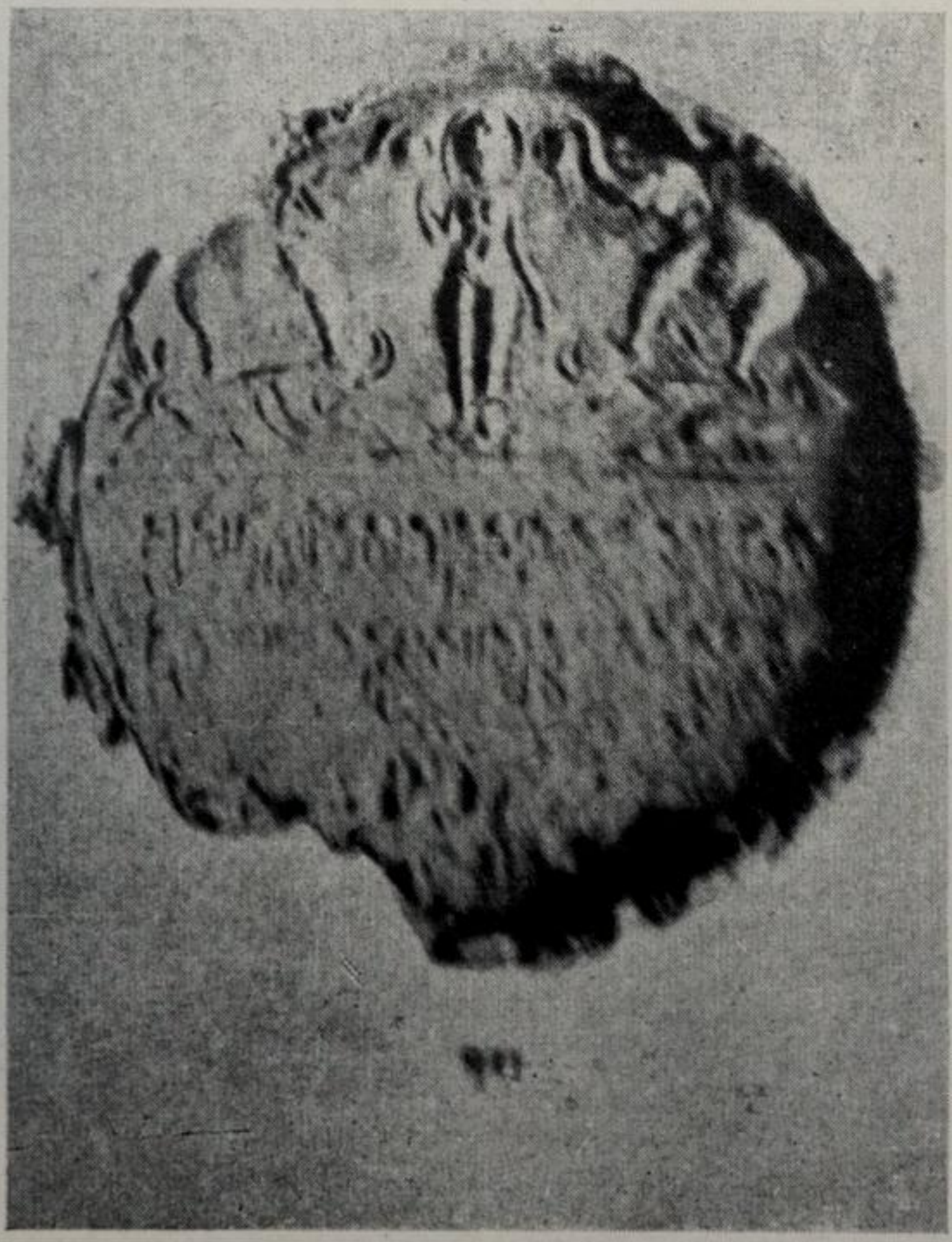

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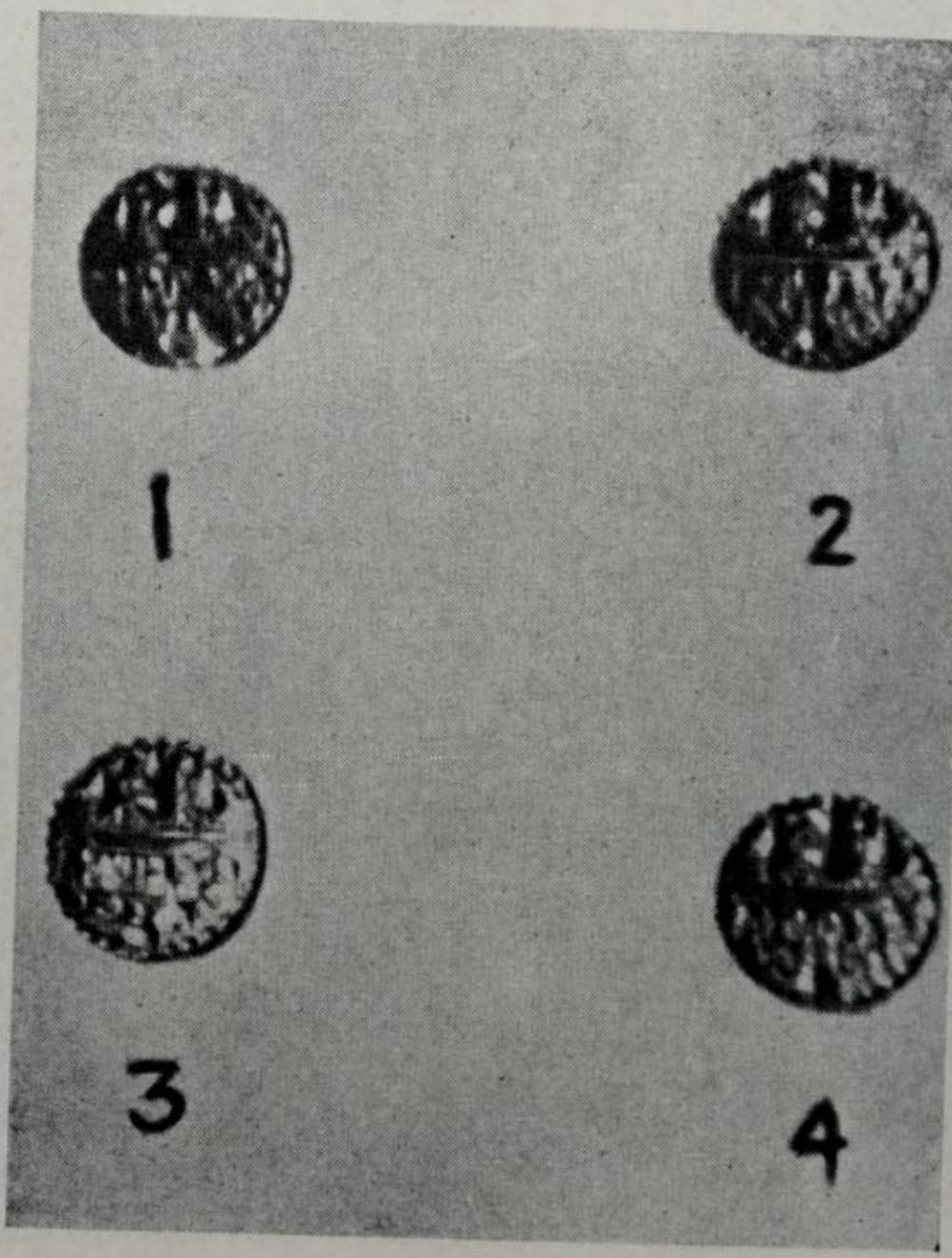

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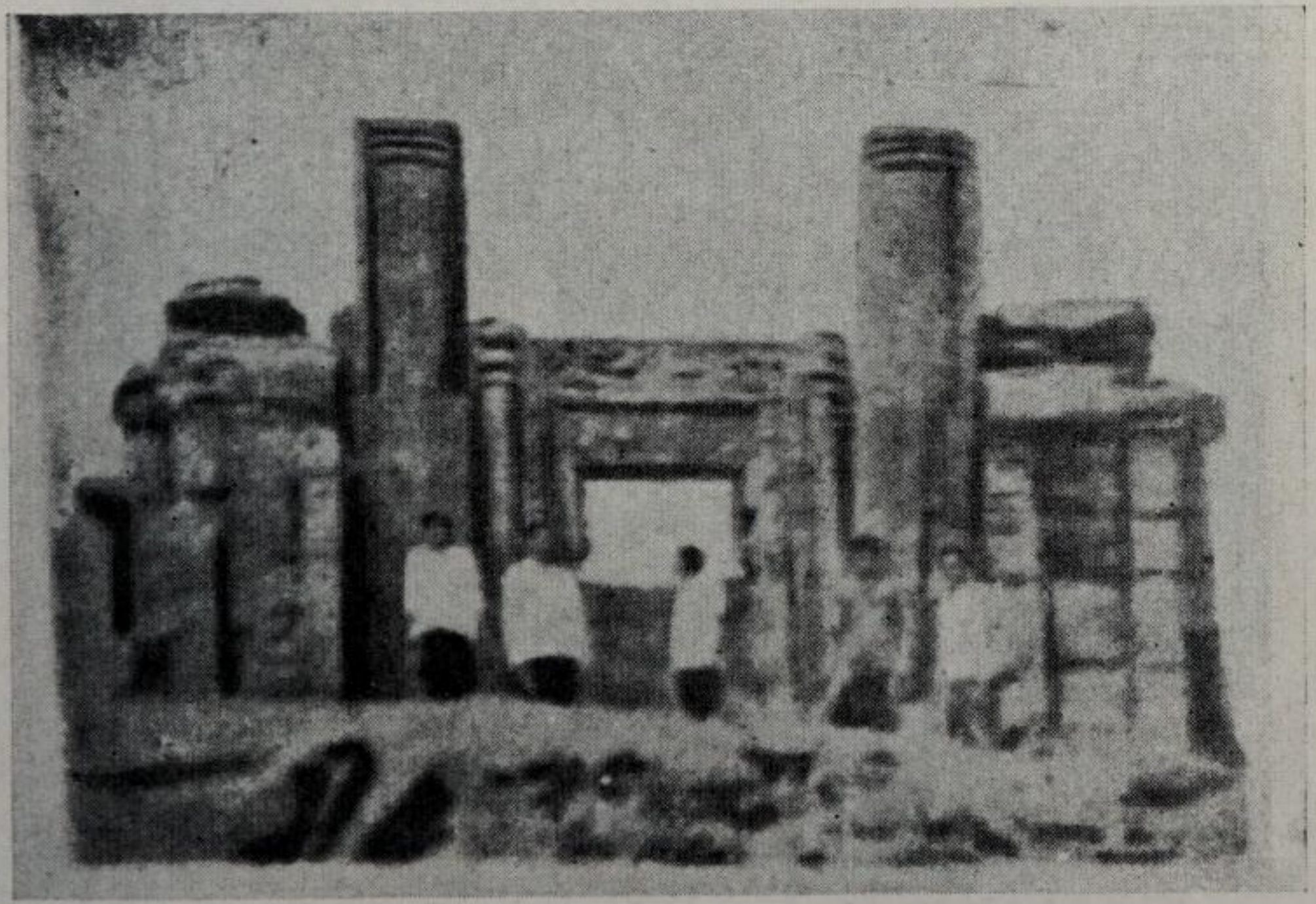

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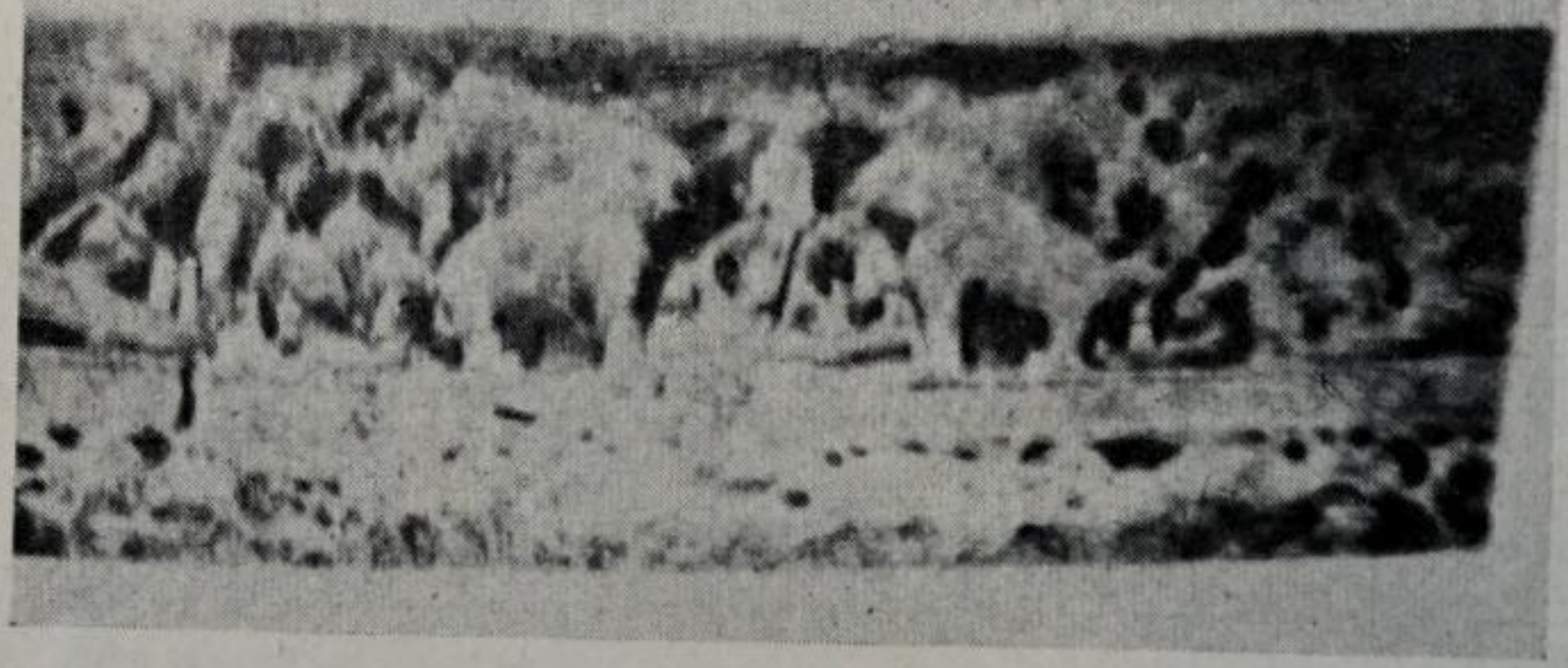

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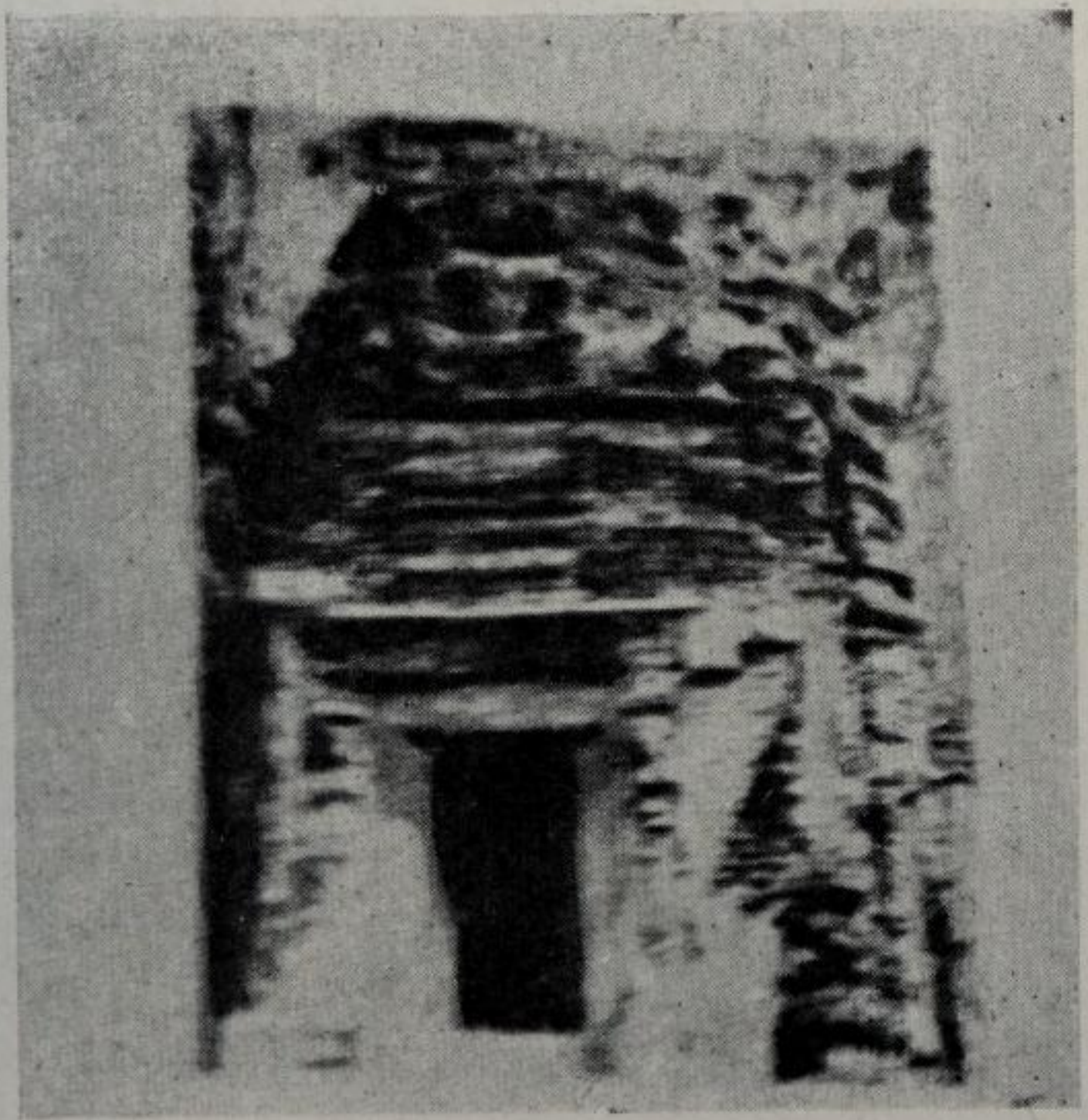

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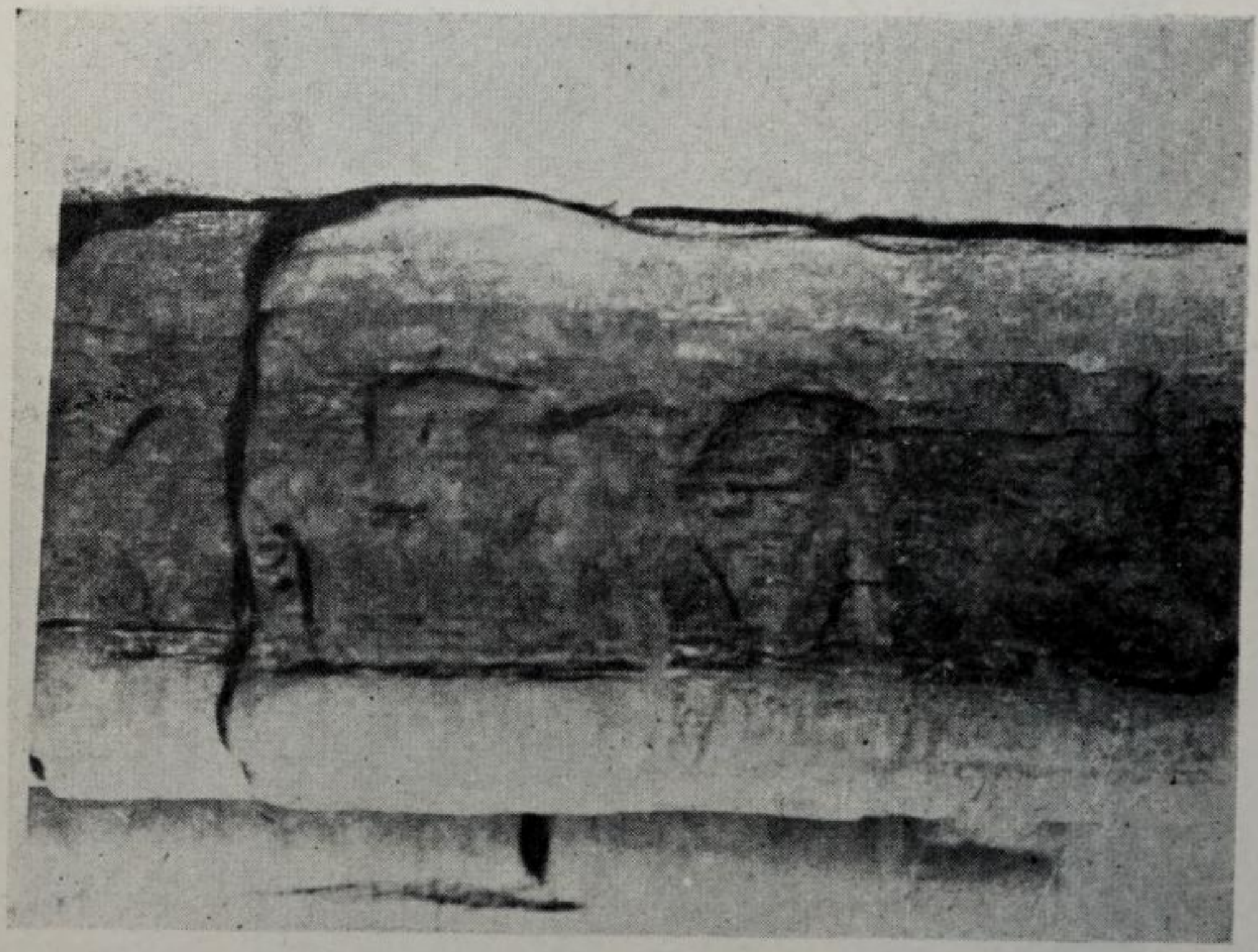

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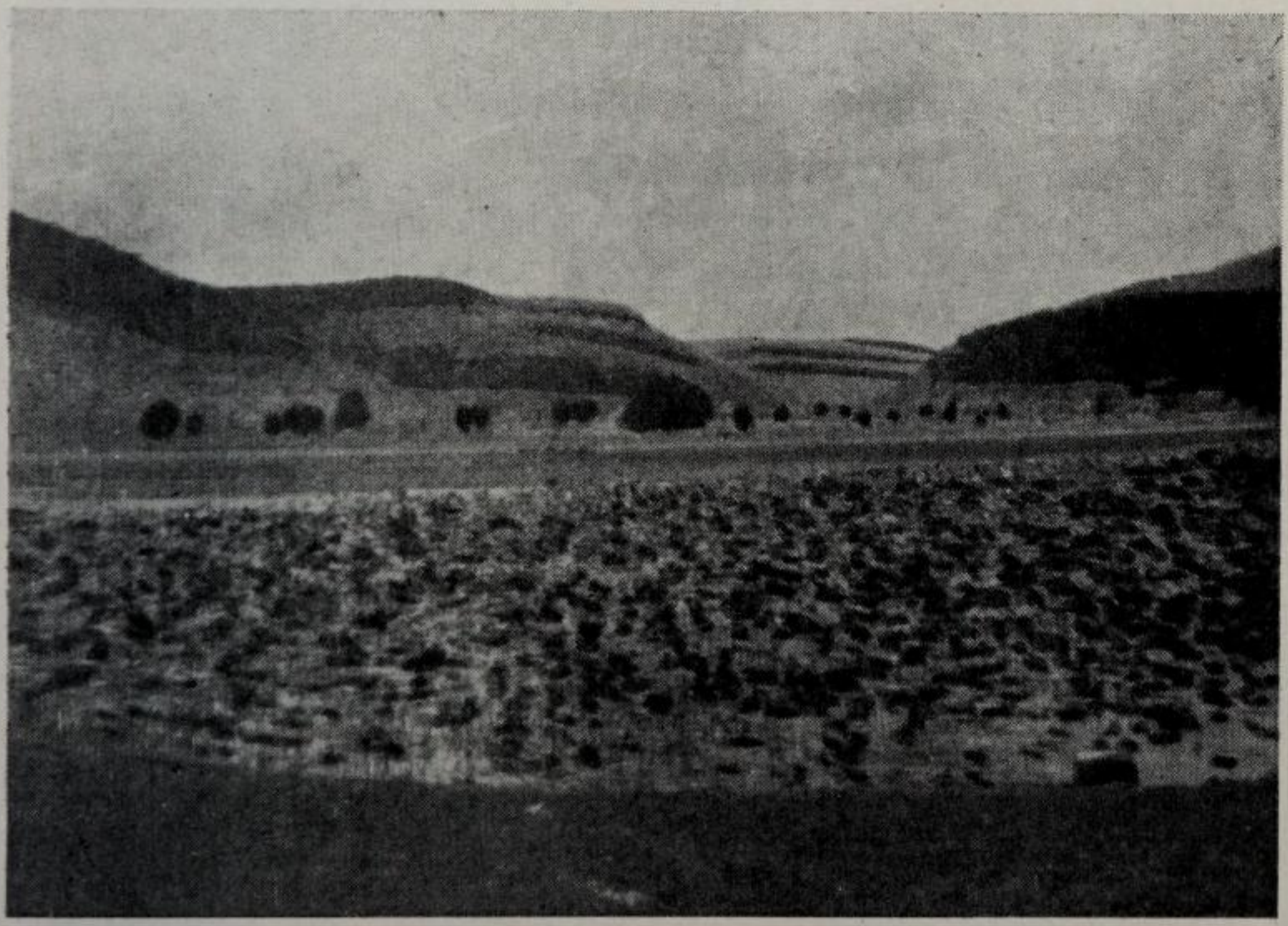

Chapter One

SOURCES

The source materials regarding the history of the Śarabhapurīyas are epigraphic, numismatic, literary and monumental. The epigraphic sources not only comprise the copper plate grants issued by the rulers of Śarabhapura but also a good number of inscriptions of other royal houses of the contemporary or near contemporary period. Besides the charters of the Śarabhapurīyas and other contemporary epigraphs, there are hoards of coins minted by the kings of Śarabhapura which throw significant light on the political history, the socio-economic condition and the cultural life of their territory. The epics and the Purāṇas do not say anything about Śarabhapura or about the Amrāryakula which ruled over the territory although they often refer to Kośala of which Śarabhapura was a part. But there are a few important literary sources of the seventh century A.D. which throw light on some aspects of the political history of the Śarabhapurīyas. The sources of informations for the reconstruction of the history of the Śarabhapurīyas are, indeed, derived from a close study of the original copper plate grants of the Śarabhapurīyan kings and other contemporary royal houses, hoards of gold coins discovered in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, the archaeological remains at Mārāguḍā and Nehena near Khariar in the Kalahandi district of Orissa, and Mallar and Tala regions in the Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh and some indigenous and foreign literary sources as discussed below.

Until now as many as nineteen Śarabhapurīyan charters have been discovered in the Chhattisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh and the Kalahandi district of Orissa. These charters, which mainly throw light on the genealogy of the dynasty, the names of the donees, the territorial divisions of Śarabhapura and the regnal years of the donors, are listed below :

1 Pipardula Copper Plates[1]

of Mahārāja Narendra's 3rd regnal year.

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1 IHQ, XIX, pp. 139-46.

2 Kurud Plates[1]
of Mahārāja Narendra's 24th regnal year.

3 Rawan Plates[2]
of Mahārāja Narendra.

4 Amgura Plates[3]
of Jayarāja's 3rd regnal year.

5 Arang Plates[4]
of Jayarāja's 5th regnal year.

6 Mallar Plates[5]
of Jayarāja's 5th regnal year.

7 Mallar Plates[6]
of Jayarāja's 9th regnal year.

8 Khariar Plates[7]
of Sudevarāja I's 2nd regnal year.

9 Sirpur Plates[8]
of Sudevarāja I's 7th regnal year.

10 Arang Plates[9]
of Sudevarāja I's 8th regnal year.

11 Raipur Plates[10]
of Sudevarāja I's 10th regnal year.

12 Sarangarh Plates[11]
of Sudevarāja I (date is lost in the damaged portion).

13 Damaged Sirpur Charter[12]
of Sudevarāja I.

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1 EI, XXXI, pp. 263-68.
2 JESI, Vol. VI, (1979), pp. 44-45.
3 The Plates are with Sri J. P. Singh Deo, Yuvarāja, Khariar, edited in JESI, IV, pp. 70-75.
4 CII, III, pp. 191-93 ff.
5 EI, XXXIII, pp. 157.
6 Ibid, XXXIV, p. 29 ff.
7 Ibid, IX, p. 172 ff.
8 EI, XXXI, p. 103 ff.
9 EI, XXIII, p. 20 ff ; Utkīrṇ Lekh (Hindi), B. C. Jain, pp. 18-22.
10 CII, III, pp. 190 ff.
11 EI, IX, pp. 281-84.
12 IHQ, X, p. 101.

14 Thakurdiya Plates[1]
of Pravararāja's 3rd regnal year.
15 Mallar Plates[2]
of Pravararāja's 7th regnal year.
16 Mallar Plates[3]
of Vyāghrarāja's 4th regnal year.
17 Mahasamund Plates[4]
of Sudevarāja's II's 7th regnal year.
18 Kuvatal Plates[5]
of Sudevarāja II's 7th regnal year (Also known as Sarangarh plates of Mahāsudevarāja).[6]
19 Pokhra Copper Plate Grant.[7]

In addition to the nineteen copper plate grants mentioned above we have several other lithic and copper plate records which have enabled us to study the problems of the genesis and early history of the royal house of Śarabhapura. Eran Stone inscription[8] of Gupta era 191=510 A.D. is one such interesting record which indicates the possibility that Śarabha, the founder of Śarabhapurīya family, might be the same as Śarabharāja, maternal grand-father of Goparāja, who, while assisting Bhānugupta against the Huṇas died in the battlefield.

Other inscriptions like the Bahmani Plates[9] and the Burhikhar Plates[10] of kings of Mekala also throw light on different aspects of

1 EI, XXII, p. 22 ff.
2 Ibid, XXXIV, p. 52 ; JIH, XXXVII, p. 265 ff.
3 EI, XXXIV, p. 49.
4 These plates were purchased by Sri S. S. Pujari, the Addl. Tasildar of Mahasamund from a smith of Dhamatari near Raipur.
5 EI, XXXI, pp. 314 16 (Kauvatal copper plates of Mahāsudevarāja II are also known as Sarangarh plates, published by L. P. Pandeya Sharma in IHQ, XXI, pp. 294-95).
6 IHQ, XXI, pp. 294-95.
7 IHQ, XXXIII, pp. 84-85. (The first and the third plates of the Pokhra grant are missing. Therefore, the place of issue and the name of the donor are not known. However, the text of the available plate indicates clearly that it is a Śarabhapurīya charter.
8 CII, III, pp. 91 ff.
9 EI, XXVII, p. 132 ; IO, IV, pp. 8-17.
10 Studies in Epigraphy (1978), pp. 183-93.

the history of the dynasty. The Bahmani grant is particularly significant because it reveals that queen Loka Prakāśā of Mekala hailed from South Kośala which was then under the suzerainty of the Amaraja dynasty. That this Amaraja dynasty of South Kośala identical with the Amarārya dynasty of Śarabhapura is further known from the Mallar plates of Vyāghrarāja. The discovery of the Burhikhar plates further confirms the above view by indicating that Surabala, being the son of the Kośalan princess, Loka Prakāśā of the Amarārya family, donated a village in the Kośalan territory. The inscriptions of Tivaradeva[1] are also important evidences which indicate that the early Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs of Mekala began their career as subordinate chiefs under the Śarabhapurīyas of Kośala.

Further the Ajanta inscription[2] of Harisena and the Aihole cave inscription[3] throw light on the invasions of the Vākāṭakas and the Chālukyas over the extant land of South Kośala which was then under the mighty Nalas and the Śarabhapurīyas.

A large number of Śarabhapurīyan gold[4] coins have been discovered in the central and central-eastern parts of India. The Śarabhapurīyan coins which are also found in Cuttack[5] district of Orissa indicate that they were carried from Kośala to the coastal tract of Orissa by way of commercial transaction in the sixth century A.D. Hoards of coins of Mahendrāditya[6] also helps us to reconstruct the chronology of the Śarabhapurīyas. The inscriptions in these coins are in the box-head characters of the fifth and the sixth century A.D. The coins of Mahendrāditya are found in the Kalahandi district of Orissa and the Raipur and Bilaspur districts of Madhya Pradesh. Since no other royal house than that of Śarabhapurīyas exercised sovereignty over this region during the period, we have accepted

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1 Bonda plates of Tivara Deva (Reg. year 5), EL., XXXIV, pp. 111-116; Rajin Plates (Reg. year 7), CII, III, pp. 291-99; and the Baloda Plates (Reg. year 9), EI, VII, pp. 102-67.

2 ASWI, IV, p. 125 ff.

3 EI, VI, p. 6 ff.

4 Prāchya Pratibhā, Vol. V, No. 1, p. 70.

5 ASI (1926-27), p. 230.

6 Altekar, A. S., The Coinage of the Gupta Empire, pp. 213-215.

Mahendrāditya as a Śarabhapurīyan king who in all probability was a successor of Narendra.[1]

Literary sources for the study of the history of the Śarabhapurīyas are really scanty. However, they are useful in as much as they allude to their military achievements[2] and give a picture of the socio-political life of South Koṡala in the period. The well known drama Ratnāvalī is one such literary work which gives a veiled allusion to Harsha's campaign against Koṡala[3] which was, obviously, directed against the Śrabhapurīyas. Brihatsaṃhitā of Varāhamihira is another important literary source which helps to know about the social and economic life of South Koṡala under the Śarabhapurīyas.

In addition to these indigenous literary works we have at our disposal the famous travel accounts of Hiuen-Tsang which though succinct, throws significant light on the political and social condition of South Koṡala in the seventh century A.D. The celebrated Chinese pilgrim in course of his itinerary is known to have visited the northern, central, southern and western parts of Orissa extensively. We learn from the life[4] of Hiuen-Tsang written by Hwi-Li that Hiuen-Tsang had already decided to proceed to Ceylon from Tāmralipti by the sea-route, when a south Indian priest is reported to have told him[5]...'For although in travelling you may have to scale mountains and pass through valleys, yet you are safe. Moreover, you will thus be able to visit Orissa and other countries and observe the sacred traces'. Having gathered this information the pilgrim proceeded from Tāmralipti to Wutā corresponding to the northern part of Orissa. From Wutā he proceeded lo Kong-u-to, identified with Kongoda. Then, he proceeded to Kalinga which was under the early Gangas. He, then, possibly travelled from Kalinganagara (Mukhalingam) to South Koṡala which was under the Śarabhapurīyas. He refers to South Koṡala as Kiao-sā-lo and

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1 See Chapter V.

2 Ratnāvalī (Haridās Sanskrit Granthamālā), Canto IV, pp. 169-73.

3 Ibid.

4 See Life, pp. 133-134.

5 Beal, S. (tr.), Travels of Hiouen-Thsang (Susil Gupta Publication), 1958, pp. 414-415.

gives the following account about the territory :[1] "This country (Kiao-sā-lo) is about 5000 li in circuit ; the frontiers consist of encircling mountain crags, forests and jungles are found together in succession. The capital is 40 li round ; the soil is rich and fertile and yields abundant crops. The town and villages are close together. The population is very dense. The men are tall and black complexioned.e The disposition of the people is hard and violent ; they are brav and empetous. There are both heretics and believers here. They are earnest in study and of a high intelligence. The king is of the Kshaṭṭrīya race ; he greatly honours the law of Buddha and his virtue and love are far renowned. There are about one hundred sangharāmas and somewhat less than 10,000 priests ; they all alike study the teaching of Great Vehicle. There are about seventy Deva temples, frequented by heretics of different persuations". This brief account of South Kośala in addition to other anecdotes pertaining to this territory presented by Hiuen-Tsang gives many hints with regard to the study of the geographical, the socio-economic and the cultural conditions of the Śarabhapurīya kingdom of the seventh century A.D. It also refers to hosts of traditions and cultural heritage of the country of the earlier period.

The monumental remains of Maraguda and Nehena in the Kalahandi district of Orissa and those of Mallar and Tala in Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh have been illustrated by us for a study of the cultural heritage of the Śarabhapurīyas. The Vishnu image of Amgura and the saivait sculptures of Tala are very significant for a study of iconography of the Śarabhapurīyan period.

In the light of the aforesaid original authorities we have reconstructed the political and cultural history of the kingdom of Śarabhapura under the hegemony of the rulers of Amarāryakula who ruled over the territory from the closing decade of the fifth century A.D. to the last quarter of the seventh century A.D.

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1 Beal, S. (tr.), Travels of Hiouen-Thsang (Susil Gupta Publication), 1958, pp. 414-415.

Chapter Two

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF ŚARABHAPURA

The kingdom of Śarabhapura which was under the suzerainty of Amarāry akula made its appearance in the historical geography of South Kośala towards the close of the fifth century A.D. It is strange that not a single copper plate grant of the Amarārya family of Śarabhapura refers to the land of Kośala or South Kośala. We do not find mention of the name of Śarabhapura in Sanskrit or Prakrit literature, although Kośala, of which Śarabhapura-kingdom was a part and parcel, is repeatedly mentioned in early Indian literature.

No attempt has been made by the scholars to throw light on the significance of the nomenclature of the kingdom of Śarabhapura. The term Śarabha means 'a fabulous animal' which is always associated with the forest region of South Kośala was named as Śarabhapura.[1] That Śarabhapura was a Kośalan territory is well indicated by the Bahmani plates[2] of Bharatabala which reveal that Lokaprakāśā, the queen of Mekala, was a princess of Amarajakula of South Kośala. There is, no doubt, that this Amarajakula of South Kośala is identical with the Amarāryakula which extended its hegemony over the kingdom of Śarabhapura in the sixth and the seventh century A.D. The study of the historical geography of the kingdom of Śarabhapura will, therefore, remain hidden and incomplete without a proper study of the topography of South Kośala.

The to pography of South Kośala as distinct from North Kośala, indicates that this extant region roughly comprised the Raipur, Bilaspur, Durg, Raigarh and Mandla districts of Madhya Pradesh, and Sambalpur, Bolangir and Northern Part of Kalahandi districts of Orissa. The rise of this ancient territory can be traced from the

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1 Śarabha, father of king Narendra of the Kurud and Pipardula copper plate charters, seems to have founded the city of Śarabhapura. The name of the progenitor indicates that the city was named after him.

2 EI, XXVII, p. 132.

time when the two epics were composed. According to Rāmāyaṇa, the great kingdom of Kośala after Rāma's death was divided between his two sons. Lava and Kuśa, the former obtaining the northern half and the latter the southern half. Pargiter[1] is of opinion that Rāma's prolonged stay in Daṇḍakāraṇya seems to be the cause giving rise to the name of Kośala in the South. D. C. Sircar[2] thinks that South Kośala was colonised by the princes of Ikshvaku dynasty of Ayodhyā. According to Mahābhārata[3] a large section of the people of the eastern part of Kośala migrated to the south terrified by the incursion of Jarāsandha. Pargiter[4] believes that these people settled in the Chhattisgarh region and carried with them the great name of their country. Thus, as a result of the mass exodus of the people of North Kośala to the south there emerged the territory of Kośala in South India. The Vana Parva of Mahābhārata[5] locates a territory of Kośala in the northern part of Dakashiṇāpatha and distinguishes this territory from the kingdom of Vidarbha. This reference also indicates that Kośala and Vidarbha were contiguous territories of Dakshiṇāpatha. The well known couplet of Mahābhārata which refers to the adjoining territories of Vidarbha and Kośala runs as follows :

Esha panthā Vidarbhānāmasaugachchhanti Kośalān/
Atah param cha deśoyam dakshiṇe dakshiṇā pathah//[6]

Mahābhārata also refers to the sacred places of Kośala like Rishabhatīrtha, Kālatīrtha and Badrikātīrtha which are usually identified by scholars in the Chhattisgarh region.[7] The Gunji Rock Inscription[8] refers to Rishabhatīrtha which seems to be identical with Rishabhatīrtha of Mahābhārata. Sabhāparva[9] of Mahābhārata also indicates that Sahadeva in course of his digvijaya in the south conquered the territory of Kośala.

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1 Pargiter, F. E., AIHT, p. 278, JRAS (1894), p. 231.
2 Altekar, A. S. and Majumdar R. C., The Vākāṭaka Gupta Age, p. 84.
3 MBH, Sabhāparva, Chapter XII, Vrs. 27-28.
4 Pargiter, F. E., AIHT, p. 278.
5 MBH, Vana Parva, LVIII, Vr. 22.
6 Ibid.
7 JKHRS, Vol. II, p. 2.
8 Ibid.
9 MBH, Sabhāparva, Chapter XXXI, Vrs. 12-13.

Kośala as a South Indian territory is depicted not only in the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata but also in the Purāṇas.[1] The Purāṇas refer to the Vindhyan range as a part of Kośala and associate the same with Mekala and Utkala.[2] Padma Purāṇa[3] connects the Mekalas, the Utkalas and the Chedis while Matsya Purāṇa[4] and the Vāyu Purāṇa[5] refer to the Mekalas, Utkalas and the Kośalas as countries situated in the Vindhya base (Ete janapadāh sarve vindhyapṛṣṭha nivāsinah). The Purāṇas further reveal that the Ikshvakus ruled over Kośala in South India in the dawn of civilization. Vāyu Purāṇa[6] informs us that forty-eight kings of the aforesaid dynasty ruled over this territory. This is corroborated by the Brahmāṇḍa,[7] Vishnu[8] and the Brahma[9] Purāṇa. The Padma Purāṇa[10] following the tradition recorded in the Rāmāyaṇa states that the southern part of the vast territory of Kośala was ruled by Kuśa after the death of Rāma with its capital at Kuśasthalī.

In the Gupta period Kośala was categorically considered to be a South Indian territory. Harisena refers to Kośala as a territory of Dakshiṇāpatha in the famous Allahabad Pillar inscription.[11] He connects Kośala with Mahakāntāra which roughly comprised the parts of Bastar, Koraput and the Kalahandi districts and Kurala which seems to have comprised a considerable part of the Bolangir district of Orissa. Varāhamihīra who flourished in the sixth century A.D. locates Kośala in the 'Āgneyakoṇa' alongwith the countries of Kalinga, Vidarbha and Andhra.[12] From the grouping of the

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1 Vāyu, XXIV, Brahmāṇḍa III, Vishnu IV, Brahma V.
2 Vāyu Purāṇa, Chapter XXXXV.
3 Vide Padma Purāṇa, Ādikhaṇḍa, Chapter VI, Vr. 36.
(Mekalān utkalam schedin dasārṇnan kukurānapi)
4 Matsya Purāṇa, Chapter 133, Vrs. 52-53.
5 Ete Janapadāh Sarve Vindhyaprishtha nivāsinah (Vide New Aspect of the History of Orissa, 1971, p. 25).
6 Vāyu, 88-8-11.
7 Brahmāṇḍa III, 63.8-11.
8 Vishnu, IV, 2.12-14.
9 Brahma, V, 1, 45-48, 51.
10 Padma Purāṇa, V, 8.130.
11 CII, III, p. 6f.
12 Agneyo dishikośalākalinga; Vangopa Vanga parāngah. (NAHO, 1971, p. 25).

countries it is clear that the author of Brihat Samhitā refers to Dakshiṇa Kośala and not Uttara Kośala. That Vidarbha was distinct though contiguous to Kośala, is indicated by the fact that the Vākāṭakas of Vidarbha are known to have conquered Kośala. The Balaghat plates[1] of Prithivīsena reveal that Narendrasena was the conqueror of Kośala and the Ajanta cave inscription[2] also informs us that Harisena, the Lord of Vatsagulma and Vidarbha was the conqueror of Kośala. That Kośala and Kalinga were contiguous territories in the sixth and the seventh centuries A.D. is indicated by the Aihole cave inscription[3] which records that Pulkesīn II conquered Kalinga alongwith Kośala (Sakośalā Kalinga). On the basis of the description of the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, Cunningham[4] presents the boundary of Kośala as comprising the whole of the upper valley of the Mahanadi and its tributaries from the source of the Narmada, from Amarkantaka in the north to the Mahanadi itself near Kanker in the South, and from the valley of Wen-Ganga on the West to the Hasdo and the Jonk river in the West. He further points out that this territory often embraced the hilly districts of Mandla and Balaghat in Madhya Pradesh on the west upto the banks of the Wen-Ganga and the middle valley of the Mahanadi on the east down to Sambalpur and Sonepur in Orissa.

A close study of the above original evidences leads us to indicate that by the fifth century A.D. the extensive land of South Kośala was surrounded by the territory of Vidarbha in the West, Mekala in the North-West, and Kalinga in the South-East.[5] This territorial extent of South Kośala in the fifth century A.D. is almost identical with the territory of the Amarāryakūla which ruled over South Kośala with its capital at Śarabhapura in the sixth and seventh century A.D. We know from the Mahābhārata that the northern

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1 EI, IX, p. 271 f.

2 EI, XXVI, p. 137 ff.

3 Grihiṇām svasvaguṇaistri varga tungā ।
Vihitānya Kshitipālamāna vangāh ॥
Abhavannupajāta bhiti lingāh ।
Yadanikena sokośalāh kalingāh ॥ (Vr. 26), EI, VI, p. 1.

4 ASR, XVII (1881-82), pp. 68-69.

5 Behera, S. C., Historical Geography of S. Kośala, NAHO (1971), p. 26.

boundary of South Kośala reached as far as the river Śone in the palmy days of history.[1] This is also corroborated by the fact that the northern border of the territory of the Śarabhapurīyas was the northern boundary of the modern Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh and river Śone is not far from this boundary. According to Vāyu Purāṇa[2] Mekala region was contiguous to South Kośala in its north-western border, and it is identified with the Maikal range territories. In view of this identification it seems that Amara-kaṇṭaka hills of the Mekala region formed the natural north-western boundary of South Kośala. The dense forest region of Daṇḍaka, comprising mostly the modern hill-tract of Bastar seems to be the Southern border of the territory.

Strategic Importance of the territory

Being situated in the mountainous regions South Kośala was an inaccessible tract which was not easily penetrated by conquerors. Even the mighty Gupta emperor who defeated Mahendra of Kośala never annexed the territory to his empire. It seems that Kośala was situated on the ancient military route from Pāṭaliputra to the South. The mountainous nature of the country was helpful for the maintenance of elephantry which was the mainstay of military strength of the monarchs. Being situated close to Trikalinga or Giri-Kalinga Southern border of South Kośala was well guarded by the range of inaccessible mountainous region. It is striking to note that Prasannapura which was the political headquarters of Pūrvarāshṭra of the kingdom of Śarabhapura, presumably founded by Prasannamātra of the Amarāryakūla was located in the dense forest region (Vanarājirājita).[3] It was due to this strategic importance of the region that the Śarabhapurīyan monarchs who emerged in the fag end of the fifth century A.D. could afford to carve out an impregnable territory which lasted for about two centuries in the post-Gupta period.

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1 MBH, Vana Parva, Ch. 84.

2 Pandey, R. B. and Sharma, B. N., Jubbalpur Past and Present, p. 1.

3 EI, XXXIV, pp. 45-49.

Land scape

Hiuen-Tsang,[1] the Chinese pilgrim, who visited South Kośala in 639 A.D. observes : "This country (Kiao-sa-lo) is about 5000 li in circuit ; the frontiers consist of encircling mountain crags ; forests and jungles are found in succession... The soil is fertile and yields abundant crops". The territory was not only abounding in inaccessible mountains but also broad navigable rivers. Mahanadi valley was, indeed, the heart of Dakshiṇa Kośala and it provided the mainstay of the civilization for centuries. Rising from the inaccessible mountains of South Kośala, with its net work of tributaries the main river of Mahanadi contributed to the agrarian prosperity which led the Chinese pilgrim to record that the country yielded abundant crops. The river Nidilā[2] mentioned in the Mallar plates of Vyāghrarāja seems to be identical with the river Naila, flowing between Raigarh and Bilaspur towns of Madhya Pradesh, now in the form of a stream. It is interesting to note that on the confluence of the rivers Seonath and Maniari we notice two Śiva temples which may be assigned to the age of the Śarabhapurīyans.[3]

Extent of the territory of the Śarabhapurīyas

A close study of the topographical features recorded in the Śarabhapurīyan copper plate grants reveals that the territory of Śarabhapura extending over a considerable part of South Kośala was divided at least into the following thirteen divisions :

1. *Chullādasīmā-bhoga*—This bhoga called Chullādasīmā was one of the important administrative divisions of the Śarabhapura kingdom. It is mentioned in the plates[4] discovered from Kurud which is located in the present Mahasamund Sub-Division of Raipur district of Madhya Pradesh. The learned editor of the Kurud plates has proposed to identify Chullādasīmā with modern charod, located in the same Mahasamund Sub-Division where the plates have been

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1 Watters, p. 201.
2 EI, XXXIV, p. 49.
3 Bajpai, K. D. and Pandey, S. K., MALHAR (1978), p. 37.
4 EI, XXXI, p. 265.

discovered.[1] The identification seems to be based on reasonable grounds because the village Keśavaka which was located in the Chullādasīmā-bhoga is no other than the village Keshwa[2] located at a distance of about seven miles South-East of Charod.

2. *Nandapura-bhoga*—This administrative zone mentioned in the Pipardula plates[3] of Mahārāja Narendra seems to be identical with one of the two adjoining villages, called Nandapur, in the Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh. The plates which record the name of the 'bhoga' were also found not far from this locality. L. P. Pandey[4] deserves credit for this identification. Within the jurisdiction of Nandapura-bhoga the village Sarkarā Padraka was located. It is almost certain that Sarkarā Padraka is no other than the present Sakarā, located at a distance of 40 miles from Nandapura.[5] Although there is another place called Sakarā in the Raipur district, it cannot be identified with Sarkarāpadraka as it is far away from Nandapura, identified with Nandapura-bhoga of the inscription.

3. *Samparājya-bhukti*—The district of Samparājya is known to us from the recently edited Amgura copper plate[6] grant of Jayarāja. Amgura, the find spot of the plates is located at a distance of 15 miles from the modern town Khariar in the Kalahandi district of Orissa. The editor of the plates has not given any identification of the Samparājya-bhukti. We think, it is probably the same as Rajamunda, situated at a distance of about 40 kilometres from the archaeological site of Maraguda, identified by us with the capital city of Śarabhapura. The village Rājya which was a part of the Samparājya-bhukti is identified by us with the present village Rajana located at a distance of 15 miles from the find spot of the plates.

4. *Pūrva-rāshṭra*—This administrative division is mentioned in the Arang[7] copper plate grant of Jayarāja and Mallar copper plates[8]

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1 EI, XXXI, p. 265.
2 Gupta, P., GAII (1973), p. 32.
3 IHQ, XIX, p. 145.
4 Ibid.
5 Gupta, P., GAII (1973), p. 212.
6 JESI, IV, pp. 70-75.
7 CII, III, pp. 191-193 f.
8 EI, XXXIV, p. 49.

of Vyāghrarāja. It cannot be identified with any modern name. It seems that the division corresponded to the eastern part of the territory covering a large area. It is difficult to say whether it was larger than a district or not. However, the village Pamvā of Pūrva-rāshṭra may rightly be identified with Pamgarh in the present Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh.[1] In that case it may be suggested that Pūrva-rāshṭra might have comprised a portion of Bilaspur and a portion of Raigarh in the North-eastern part of the Śarabhapura kingdom. The village Kuntura Padraka of Pūrva-rāshṭra mentioned in the Mallar plates[2] remains unidentified. Probably it is now extinct. Another village located in the Pūrva-rāshṭra called Śrīsahika has been rightly identified with Sirsahi, 10 miles South-West of Tundra in the Baloda Bazar Tahsil of Bilaspur district.[3]

5. *Antaranālaka Vishaya*[4]—This district is not represented by any modern place. It seems, that it was the region in between Pūrva-rashṭra and Nagarottara patha.[5] Kadamba Pradullaka which was situated in the said district seems to represent two adjoining villages namely Kadamba and Ulaka in the vicinity of Mallar.[6]

6. *Nagarottara patha*[7]—This division seems to indicate that it was a bigger territorial unit towards the Northern direction of the capital of Śarabhapura. This zone may be identified with the northern parts of the territory comprising the modern Raipur and Durg districts of Madhya Pradesh. Nagarottarapatha may be identified

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1 The village Pamvā appears in the Arang grant of Mahājayarāja. It is identifiable with present Pamgarh twenty-one miles north of Tundra in the Janjgir tahsil of Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh. It lies in the east of Bilaspur and Raipur.

2 See above.

3 Raipur grant of Mahāsudevarāja, CII, III, p. 138.

4 Mallar plates, EI, XXXIII, p. 157. Dr. P. Gupta identifies it with a territory lying on both sides of some rivulet. (Ibid).

5 Nagarottarapatha which finds mention in the Mallar plates of Jayrāja (EI, XXXIV, p. 30) might have been an administrative division in the northern part of Śarabhapura. Dr. P. Gupta identifies it with Nargod about 10 miles from Bilaspur, GAII, (1973), p. 31.

6 EI, XXXIII, p. 157.

7 EI, XXXIV, p. 30, Dr. Gupta, P., GAII (1973), p. 31.

with Nargod[1] in the Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh. The village Mokkepika has been rightly identified with Mopka, situated at a distance of about 10 miles from Bilaspur towards the Mahanadi.[2]

7. *Kshitimaṇḍāhāra*[3]—Kshitimaṇḍāhāra mentioned in the Khariar plates of Mahāsudevarāja I has been identified by us with the modern Kalimati which seems to be a Prakritised form of Sanskrit term Kshitimaṇḍa. The place is located at a distance of six miles north-west of Khariar in the Kalahandi district of Orissa. The village Navannaka mentioned in the line four of the plates has been correctly identified by Sten Konow[4] with the modern Nehena on the bank of the river Sundar near Khariar. Nehena, indeed, is an archaeological site where we have discovered eleven numbers of gold coins of king Prasannamātra of Amarāryakūla. In the same site we have also noticed an interesting image of Vishnu[5] which on iconographic grounds has been assigned by us to the Śarabhapurīyans who were devout worshippers of Vishnu. The other adjoining village Sāmbilaka has been identified by Dr. P. Gupta with the present Sanduhel,[6] adjacent to Nehena. It is interesting to note that in the village Sanduhel among the ruins of a Śiva temple we have recovered an image of Śiva as well as several erotic sculptures, assignable to the 7th century A.D.

8. *Tundaraka-bhukti*[7]—Tundaraka which was an important administrative zone, according to the Sarangarh plates of Mahāsudevarāja I, has been rightly identified with the present Tundra, located at a distance of about six miles south of Seorinarayan and about 35 miles west of Sarangarh, the find spot of the plates. The village Chullāndaraka of the Tundaraka-bhukti is, undoubtedly, the same as the present Chulandar village in the Bilaspur district.[8]

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1 Ibid.
2 Ibid, p. 189.
3 Khariar grant of Mahāsudevarāja, EI, IX, pp. 171-72.
4 Ibid.
5 The said image of Vishnu is at present preserved in the Khariar Museum (Vide Chapter XV of the present work).
6 Gupta, P., GAII, (1973), p. 210.
7 EI, IX, p. 283. Hiralal suggested that Chulāndaraka should be near Tundra in Baloba Bazar tahsil of Raipur district in M.P (Ibid).
8 Ibid.

9. *Tosaḍḍa-bhukti*[1]—Tosaḍḍa-bhukti mentioned in the Arang plates of Sudevarāja I has been identified with Tusda near Dumarpalli, about 30 miles to the south-east of Arang.[2] But the village Śivalingika of the said bhukti is a matter of further investigation.

10. *Śaṇkhachakra-bhoga*[3]—Śaṇkhachakra-bhoga mentioned in the line four of the Mallar plates of Pravararāja has not been so far identified by scholars. G. Bhattacharya,[4] the editor of the Mallar plates, has not given any identification of this bhoga. In our opinion it should be identified with the present Chakrabeda near Bilaspur in Madhya Pradesh. Mitragrama included in the Śaṇkhachakra-bhoga has been identified by Dr. P. Gupta with modern Matiya in the Bilaspur district.[5]

11. *Tuḍa-rāshṭra*[6]—Tuḍa-rāshṭra is some times confused by the scholars with Tundaraka-bhukti.[7] Dr. V. V. Mirashi thinks of the villages Tunda, Tundra, Tundri or Tundargaon as reminiscent of ancient Tuḍa-rāshṭra.[8] But such an identification is untenable because the scribe of the Śarabhapurīyan charter was not expected to commit a mistake by confusing Tuḍa with Tundaraka. Dr. Mirashi, however, identified the village Aṣāḍhaka in the Tuḍa-rāshṭra mentioned in the Thakurdiya plates[9] with the modern Asaud near Arang (82.52°N—21.45°S).

12. *Hākirī-bhoga*[10]—Hākirī-bhoga mentioned in the line 4 of the Kauvatal plates was read by Pandit L. P. Pandeya Sharma as Dākirī bhoga in his paper entitled 'Sarangarh plates'.[11] In any case this geographical name yet remains unidentified. The village Sunika which was located in the Hākirī-bhoga mentioned in the line 5 of

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1 EI, XXXII, p. 20, Gupta, P., GAII (1973), p. 31.
2 Ibid.
3 EI, XXXIV, p. 52.
4 Ibid.
5 JIH, XXXVII, p. 265.
6 EI, XXII, p. 22.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 EI, XXXI, p. 135.
11 Ibid.

the Kauvatal[1] plates of Sudevarāja II cannot be identified in the geographical maps of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh ; but Khalapadraka, located in the Dākirī-bhoga has been rightly identified by Sri B. C. Jain[2] with modern Khallari in the Raipur district. It seems that the same village was also known as Khalvāṭaka in the Khallari stone inscription of Hari-Braḥmadeva in Vikram Samvat 1470[3].

13. *Maṇṭarāja-bhukti*—Manṭarāja-bhukti is known to us from the recently discovered Rawan plate[4] of Mahārāja Narendra. Line 2 of the plate refers to the village Ārāmaka in the Manṭarāja-bhukti. In the well known Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta, king Manṭarāja is known to have ruled over the region of Kurāla. If Kurāla is the same as Karla in the Bolangir district of Orissa, it is reasonable to identify Manṭarāja-bhukti in its vicinity. In that case Ārāmaka of Manṭarāja-bhukti may be identified with the present village Rampur near Sonepur in the Bolangir district of Orissa. It seems that Ārāmaka of the Śarabhapurīyan period was known as Ārāmakaṭaka under the Somavamsīs.[5] Vaṭapadraka mentioned in the Rawan plate seems to be identical with Vaṭapadraka of the Kosirā-Nandapura viśaya, as recorded in the Bardula plates of Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna.[6]

Cities and Towns

The known cities and towns of the kingdom of Sarabhapura are Tilakeśvara vasāka, Śarabhapura, Śrīpura and Prasannapura. Of these urban centres Tilakeśvara has not been identified by scholars. We think that the name of the town was Tilaka which was associated with the temple of Īśvara or Śiva. As per this derivation we are inclined to identify Tilaka with the modern Tala on the confluence of the rivers Seonath and Maniari in the Bilaspur district of

1 Ibid, p. 315.
2 CII, IV, p. 575.
3 Ibid.
4 JESI, VI (1979), pp. 44-45.
5 Chaudwar plates of Janamejaya Mahāśiva Gupta, IO, IV, p. 138.
6 EI, XXVII, pp. 287-90.

Madhya Pradesh. This place has been referred to as Vijayatilakeśvara in the Kurud plates[1] of Mahārāja Narendra. Construction of fort on the 'nadī-samgama' is prescribed by Kauṭilya in Arthaśāstra. It is probable that Narendra in course of his military march conquered the Tilakeśvara region and issued the copper plate grant to commemorate his victory. It is striking to note that there are two Śiva temples at Tala probably the same as Tilaka which are assigned to the 6th century A.D. of Śarabhapurīyan period.

Śarabhapura has been identified by L. P. Pandey Sharma[2] with Śarabhagarh in the Sundargarh district of Orissa. Prof. K. D. Bajpai[3] identifies it with Malhar but in the Chapter X of the present work I have identified it with Maraguda which might be an 'apabhramsa' of the Sanskrit word Amaragaḍa. We may note here that the illustrious Amarajakūla or the Amarāryakūla of South Kośala is known from inscriptional sources to have laid the foundation of Śarabhapura. Besides, the affinity of nomenclature, there are some literary and archaeological evidences, which as discussed in Chapter X indicate that Maraguda of the Kalahandi district, on the border of Madhya Pradesh was the metropolitan fortress of the Śarabhapurīyans.

City of Prasannapura, mentioned in line 3 of the Mallar plates[4] was located on the bank of the sacred river Nidilā which may be identified with the river Naila flowing between Raigarh and Bilaspur and the ancient city of Prasannapura may be searched somewhere on its banks. It was, obviously, founded by king Prasannamātra.

Śrīpura, as mentioned in the Mallar plates of Pravararāja and Kauvatal or Sarangarth plates of Sudevarāja II, has been unanimously identified by scholars with the modern Sirpur, near Raipur in Madhya Pradesh. The excavation of Sirpur has yielded archaeological remains of the 8th century. Further investigations may reveal the remains of the earlier centuries.

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1 EI, XXXI, p. 265.

2 Proceedings of the Fifth Oriental Conference, p. 461. Late Dr. R. L. Mitter was in favour of taking Sambalpur as the representative town of ancient Śarabhapura (Ibid).

3 ABORI (1977-78), pp. 433-37.

4 EI, XXXIV, p. 45 ff.

The above identification of the districts, towns and villages of the kingdom of Śarabhapura reveals that the boundary of the Śarabhapurīyan territory extended from the Maikal range bordering on the western limits of Bilaspur district to the Raigarh district in the North-east, from Bolangir district in the east to the river Tel in the Kalahandi district of Orissa and from the Sihawa mountains in the South to the Western limits of the Durg district of Madhya Pradesh. This territorial extent of the kingdom of Śarabhapura with its capital at Maraguda (Śarabhapura) roughly covered an area of 1000 miles in circuit (5000 li) as reported by Hiuen-Tsang in the seventh century A.D. It comprised the present Durg, Bilaspur, Raigarh and Raipur districts of Madhya Pradesh and parts of Bolangir and Kalahandi districts of Orissa. The topography reveals that the civilisation under the Śarabhapurīyas was nourished by the river Mahanadi and its tributaries, namely Seonath, Maniari, Jonk, Tel, Sundar, Udanti and Ong. Thus, the kingdom of Śarabhapura in the ancient land of South Kośala may be rightly termed as the gift of the Mahanadi.

Chapter Three

SOUTH KOŚALA IN PRE-ŚARABHAPURĪYA PERIOD

The early history of South Koŝala in the pre-Gupta period is shrouded in considerable mystery. The Allahabad inscription[1] of Samudragupta is the first inscriptional evidence which throws dim light on the history of South Koŝala of the fourth century A.D. On the eve of the South Indian Campaign of Samudragupta Koŝala unlike Kalinga seems to have been under the supremacy of one single sovereign. Having inflicted a defeat on king Mahendra, the lord of South Koŝala, Samudragupta is known to have vanquished several independent chiefs of Kalinga. Soon after the South Indian Campaign of Samudragupta Kalinga is known to have been united under the Māṭharas who ruled over the central tract of Orissa from C 350 A.D. to C 550 A.D. During the Māṭhara-rule kalinga was not a part of the Gupta empire. The Māṭharas used their regnal years in their charters ; they never used the Gupta Era in their charters. The contiguous territory of South Koŝala also appears to be outside the frontiers of the Gupta empire in the time of Samudragupta. The Nalas who are known to have ruled over South Koŝala in the fourth and fifth century A.D. were not subordinates of the Imperial Guptas. Like the Māṭharas of Kalinga they too enjoyed sovereign status over south Koŝala for about two centuries.

The Nalas are known to us from the Kesaribeda plates[2] of Arthapati, the Rithapur plates[3] of Bhavadattavarman, the Podagarh stone inscription[4] of Skandavarman, the Rajim stone inscription[5] of Vilāsatunga and a hoard of gold coins[6] discovered at Edenga near

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1 EI, XXVII, p. 137.
2 EI, XXVIII, pp. 12-16.
3 Ibid, XIX, pp. 100-104.
4 Ibid, pp. 153-57.
5 Ibid, XXVI, pp. 49-58.
6 IO, Vol. I, Part II, p. 103. JNSI, I, p. 29 ff.

Baster in Madhya Pradesh. In addition to these sources a seal[1] discovered from Bhita throws light on the genealogy of the Nalas. A close study of the sources gives us the following genealogy of the Nalas :

1 Vrishabhadhvaja
||
2 Varāharāja
||
3 Arthapati
||
4 Bhavadattavarman
||
5 Skandavarman
||
6 Prithivīrāja
||
7 Viruparāja
||
8 Vilāsatunga

The Nalas who trace their descent from king Nala of Niṣādha,[2] ruled over Koraput Bastar region in the later part of the fourth century A.D. As we learn from the Kesaribeda copper plate grant of Arthapati, they ruled over this region with their capital located at the city of Puṣkarī. Subsequently, under Bhavadattavarman they are known to have followed a policy of imperialism and marched as far as Nandivardhana which was the capital of the Vākāṭakas of Vidarbha. This is knowm to us from the Rithapur plates which had been issued from Nandivardhana identified with Nandapura[3] near

1 ASR (1911-12), p. 51, Seal No. 25.

2 Pargiter, F. E., DKA, p. 51.

3 JASB—NS, XIX, pp. 160-61. R. B. Hiralal suggested that the city is most probably identical with the Nagardhan (or Nandardhan) four miles south of Ramtek and twentyeight miles north of Nagpur (A copper plate inscription of C.P. and Berar, p. 11 ; JBORS, XIX, p. 182). According to Sindurgiri mahātmya Nandi Vardhana was a holy place (Mirashi, Proceedings of 10th Oriental Conference, p. 458). T. A. Wellsted mentions that there are

Nagardhana in the close proximity of Nagpur. It seems that Bhavadatta inflicted a crushing defeat on Narendrasena and captured Nandivardhana. This defeat of the Vākāṭakas at the hands of the Nalas is, indeed, a great event in the political history of ancient India. We learn from the Rithapur plates that Bhavadattavarman after achieving signal *victory* over the Vākāṭakas proceeded as far as Prayāga and took a sacred bath on the confluence of the Ganges and Yamunā. It is further interesting to note that a seal discovered from Bhita near Prayāga refers to a kind called Vrishabhadhvaja who like the Nalas uses the epithet Maheśvara mahāsenatishreshṭharājya vibavaha. It is further possible that Vrishavadhvaja was also a ruler of the Nala dynasty. The evidences of the Rithapur plates and Bhita seal taken together lead us to indicate that the mighty Nalas after vanquishing the Vākāṭakas moved in the northern direction possibly against the Guptas. It is not far-fetched to infer that Skandagupta, the then Gupta monarch could not have been silent when the Nala king having defeated his allies that he must have taken all possible steps to check the rising power of the Nalas. It was probably with the help of Skandagupta that Narendrasena who was once subjugated by Bhavadattavarman avenged the defeat and restored the capital of Nandivardhana from the Nalas. He is also known to have marched against South Koṡala and it seems that in view of the impending danger arising out of Nala invasion the Guptas and the Vākāṭakas who were united from the time of Rudrasena II[1] by a matrimonial alliance, now took effective measures jointly to hurl back the mighty battalions of the Nalas from the Vākāṭaka territories. Narendrasena seems to have been substantially helped by Skandagupta in inflicting a crushing defeat on the Nalas of South Koṡala. It is well indicated by the Balaghat plates[2] of Prithivīsena II which reveal that Narendrasena's commands were obeyed and honoured

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stronger grounds for supposing that at Nandpur, one mile south-east of Nagardhan we find the remains of the ancient Nandivardhana and not at Nagardhana (JASB-NS, XIX, pp. 160-61). Nandivardhana of the Rithapur plates has been identified with Nandur of the yeotmal taluq in the district of the same name in Maharashtra (EI, XIX, p. 102).

1 Majumdar, R. C. and Pusalkar, Classical Age, p. 179.

2 EI, IV, p. 67 ff.

by the lords of Kośala, Mekala and Mālava (Kośala-mekala-mālavadhipatyavhyarchita śāsana). We learn from the same plates that Prithivīsena II twice retrieved the fallen fortunes of his family. It is almost clear that he fought against the Nala king Bhavadattavarman probably with the help of Skandagupta. It seems that there was a protracted war between the Nalas and the Vākātakas for a considerable period. It may be noted in this context that Skandagupta records in his inscription that he thrice retrieved the fallen fortunes of his family[1]. It is probable that Skandagupta played an important role in curbing the growing insolence of Bhavadattavarman who had not only occupied Nandivardhana but also proceeded as far as Prayāga the heart of the Gupta empire. Bhavadattavarman's sacred bath at Prayāga cannot be dismissed merely as a religious act. Having captured the capital of the Vākātakas who were matrimonially allied with the Guptas, he could not have marched as far as Prayāga without military precaution and motivation. In the light of these circumstantial evidences we are inclined to suggest that Narendrasena could not have repulsed the Nalas without substantial help from the Guptas. Since Bhavadattavarman himself had proceeded as far as Prayāga, it is also quite reasonable that Skandagupta must have risen upto the occasion and come to the rescue of Narendrasena to inflict a defeat on Bhavadattavarman. The united military force of the Guptas and the Vākātakas must have caused a consternation in the length and breadth of the Nala empire. As the Podagarh stone inscription of Skandavarman indicates that the people were horrified and in utter helplessness deserted the city of Puṣkarī which was captured by the enemies for some time[2]. Lines 3 and 4 of the inscription[3] clearly indicate that in course of the crisis the citizens deserted the town of Puṣkarī which fell into the hands of the enemies. It seems that during this period the Guptas succeeded in occupying a considerable part of South Kośala before they reached Puṣkarī and occupied it. The Nalas, thus, received a set back and rude shock from which they must have taken sometime to recover. It was

1 Majumdar, R. C. and Pusalkar, Classical Age, pp. 26-27.
2 IO, I, Part II, p. 94.
3 Ibid.

Skandavarman, son of Bhavadattavarman, who seems to have driven out the enemies from the capital when Skandagupta had passed away and the Vākāṭaka king Narendrasena had died. This opportunity was seized by Skandavarman who succeeded in 'repelling his enemies by his valour' and in reclaiming the lost prosperity which had fallen into the hands of the enemies. He is also credited to have repeopled the deserted town of Puṣkarī[1]. These references in the Podagarh inscription indicate that Skandavarman succeeded in restoring the prestige of the Nalas in the Koraput and Baster region ; but very probably he lost his stronghold over the territory conquered by Bhavadattavarman. It seems that the Guptas continued to exercise their suzerainty over the northern part of South Kośala during this period. Gupta supremacy over South Kośala is indicated by the Kurud plates[2] which reveal that a generation before Mahārāja Narendra, Paramabhaṭṭārakapāda[3] while taking a sacred bath in the holy water of the Ganges had donated the village Keśavaka identified with modern Kesawa,[4] near Mahasamund in the Raipur district, located in South Kośala in favour of the brahmin Bhāśṛutasvāmīn by means of a charter written on palmleaves. Subsequently, Mahārāja Narendra regranted the village to Śankhasvāmīn, son of Bhaśṛutasvāmīn, the original donee. Our presumption that Skandagupta supported the cause of the Vākāṭakas in driving out the Nalas and occupied a portion of South Kośala is well supported by the evidence of the Kurud plates which refer to the rule of Paramabhaṭṭāraka over South Kośala. This Paramabhaṭṭāraka was no other than a Gupta monarch, whoever he might be. In fact the imperial title Paramabhaṭṭāraka was popularised by the Imperial Guptas in the fourth century A.D. Dr. M. G. Dixit[5] holds the view that Paramabhāṭṭārakapāda of the Kurud plates was Śarabha, father of Narendra. By no stretch of imagination Śarabha who is usually identified with Śarabharāja,[6] a tribal chief under the Imperial Guptas,

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1 Rajguru, S. N., IO, I, Part II, p. 94.
2 EI, XXXI, pp. 263-68 (Lines 4-6).
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 EI, XXXI, pp. 263-68.
6 CII, III, p. 91.

can be associated with the imperial title Paramabhaṭṭāraka used by the Gupta overlords. On the contrary it seems quite reasonable to believe that Śarabharāja owed allegiance to the Imperial Guptas as his daughter's son Goparāja was a feudatory chief under them. In the said inscription king Narendra gives respectful reference to Paramabhaṭṭāraka-pāda who was presumably accepted as the overlord by his predecessor. But he himself, undoubtedly, threw off the Gupta yoke in the early part of the sixth century A.D. In his inscription he does not describe himself as a subordinate of Paramabhaṭṭāraka-pāda and he used regnal year of his own, and not Gupta Era in his charters.

From the aforesaid account it is clear that South Kośala was a part of the Gupta empire at least in the second half of the fifth century A.D. The mighty Nalas who followed the policy of imperialism expanded their territory in the northern and north-western direction against the Guptas and the Vākāṭakas who were repulsed, and ultimately they were confined to the Koraput Bastar region during the reign of Skandavarman. It may be pointed out here that the political power of the Guptas was fast declining and the Vākāṭakas of Vidarbha are not known to have flourished after Prithivīsena II. That was the period when king Harisena of the Vākāṭaka family of Vatsagulma had a meteoric rise as a great conqueror in the Indian history. We learn from his Ajanta cave inscription[1] that he conquered Kuntala, Avanti, Lāṭa, Kośala, Kalinga and Āndhra. The rise of Harisena as the conqueror of Kośala in or about the end of the fifth century A.D. must have been the cause for the collapse of the Nala political power. The defeat of the Nalas at the hands of the Vākāṭaka king Harisena must have caused a vacuum in the hegemony of South Kośala because the great Vākāṭaka conqueror is not known to have flourished for any longer period after his dramatic success. Harisena seems to have swept over South Kośala like a great storm. There is no evidence whatsoever to prove Vākāṭaka hegemony over South Kośala during this period because it was at this critical juncture in the fag end of the fifth century A.D. there emerged a local chief called Śarabha,

1 Hyd. Arch. Survey No. 14, p. 11.

probably of tribal origin, as the progenitor of a new royal family, popularly known to history as the Śarabhapurīyas. The earliest ruler of this royal family, Narendra describes in his royal seals that he was born of Śarabha (Śarabhāt prāpta janmanah)[1]. The term Śarabha means a 'fabulous animal having 8 legs, stronger than a lion'.[2] Such reference only indicates the theory of miraculous origin which was gaining ground in India in the fifth and sixth centuries of the Christian era. A critical observation, however, indicates that he must be a tribal chief[3] who had some sort of allegiance for the Gupta overlords (Paramabhaṭṭāraka-pāda). The name Śarabha mentioned in the seals of the Pipardula plates of Narendra has been considered to be identical with Śarabharāja who happened to be the maternal grandfather of Goparāja as mentioned in the Eran inscription[4] of the time of Bhānugupta of 510-11 A.D. It seems that the valiant chief Śarabharāja was well known for his power and prowess and he was one political adventurer who was deeply conscious of the declining state of the Gupta empire. He seems to have maintained nominal allegiance for the Gupta overlord while he carved out the territory of Śarabhapura in South Kośala. It is probable that in course of the campaigns of Harisena Śarabha might have assisted the Vākāṭaka conqueror and gained favourable ground for his rise to political power at the decline of the Vākāṭakas. Whatever it might be, it is clear that Śarabha, probably identical with the tribal chief Śarabharāja, emerged as a political adventurer in South Kośala at the end of the Nala supremacy. The cradle of Śarabhapurīyas seems to be located in the border of Bastar, not far from Puṣkarī, which was the capital of the Nalas, Śarabha must have chosen a natural hill-fort on the northern border of Puṣkarī to check the ramnent Nala political power. In our opinion[5] Śarabharāja in

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1 Vide Chapter One of the present work.

2 Apte, V. S., The students Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 549.

3 See above.
"It may be pointed out in this context that Harsha refers to a tribal chief called Śarabhketu in his drama Ratnāvalī", Ratnāvalī Sanskrit Drama, 1924, Act IV, p. 39.

4 CII, III, p. 91.

5 See Chapter Ten.

accordance with the injunctions of Dharmaśāstras founded his capital in a natural hill-fort (Giridurga) at Maraguda near Khariar in the Kalahandi district of Orissa. It is quite probable that Amarajakūla or Amarāryakūla which was the real name of the royal house of Śarabhapura, influenced in naming the new hill-fort as Amaragarh, now known to the people as Maraguda. As we have to say later, in our present work that the location of Śarabhapura at Maraguda fallies with the geographical location of South Kośala as pointed out by Hiuen Tsang.[1] Thus, in the fag end of the fifth century A.D. the decline of the Nala political power and the political confusion which followed, the Vākāṭaka invasion of Harisena provided the background for the rise of Śarabhapura with their capital at Maraguda and the subsequent northward expansion of the kingdom of Śarabhapura.

In course of their northward expansion the Śarabhapurīyans must have been face to face with the rulers of Rājarshitūlyakūla which ruled over the Arang region in the fifth century A.D. This is indicated by the Arang copper plates[2] of Bhīmasena II dated in the G.E. 182. The date of the Arang plates is indeed, controversial. While V. V. Mirashi,[3] is of the opinion that the charter is dated in the G.E. 182. Hiralal,[4] the editor of the plates on the other hand is of the opinion that the date of the charter is 282 G.E. It seems that Bhīmasena II issued the charter in 501 A.D. and he was preceded by five rulers. The first known ruler of this dynasty was Mahārāja Sura who seems to have ruled over Arang region under the overlordship of the Imperial Guptas in the beginning of the fifth century A.D. His successors according to the genealogy of the Arang grant are as follows :

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1 Travels of Hiuen-Tsang, Watters, pp. 200-201.
2 EI, IX, p. 342 ; XXVI, p. 228, IHQ, XXII, p. 63, BDCRI, VIII, p. 5.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.

Sura
|
Dayita I
|
Bibhishana
|
Bhīmasena I
|
Dayitavarman II
|
Bhīmasena II

If we allow roughly a period of twenty years to each of them, we have to assign a century to Rājarshitūlyakūla which ruled over the northern part of South Kośala contemporaneous with the Nalas. However, with the rise of the Śarabhapurīyans in the beginning of the sixth century A.D. apparently they were ousted from the northern part of South Kośala. It seems that Narendra was the first Śarabhapurīya monarch who inflicted a defeat on Bhīmasena II and issued the Pipardula and the Kurud charters in that region.

A close study of the political condition of South Kośala in the pre-Śarabhapurīya period reveals that the northern part of South Kośala was a part of the Gupta empire in the fifth century A.D. while the Nalas ruled over the Southern part of Kośala in the same period. The imperial designs of the Nalas made them enemies of the Guptas and the Vākāṭakas whose united efforts seem to have brought about their ultimate decline. The fall of the Nalas followed by the invasion of Harisena resulted in a political confusion and anarchy which was terminated by Śarabha, the progenitor of the royal house of Śarabhapura in the fag end of the fifth century A.D.

Chapter Four

ORIGIN OF THE ŚARABHAPURĪYAS

The origin of the Śarabhapurīyas of South Koṡala like the origin of many other dynasties of India of the post-Gupta period is not clearly known from their inscriptions. Although we have obtained as many as nineteen copper plate grants[1] of this royal house, not a single charter gives any account with regard to the cradle of the Śarabhapurīya power. As many as twelve copper plate grants of the Śarabhapurīyas refer to Śarabhapura as their capital which was, obviously, the metropolitan fort which was founded by Śarabha, the progenitor of the dynasty. As we have hinted earlier the site of this fort was located in the dense forest region of Kalahandi in a locality called Maraguda. This hilly tract appears to be the home-land of the Śarabhapurīyas who expanded their territory in the northern and western direction, and ruled almost over the whole of South Koṡala in their palmy days.

The Śarabhapurīya monarchs, as we learn from their charters, were peculiarly reticent to give an account of their origin and genealogy. Their seals attached to their charters fortunately throw light on the genealogy of their family as well as about the progenitor of the dynasty. The Pipardula copper plate[2] grant which is the first known charter of the Śarabhapurīyas is issued from Śarabhapura and the seal attached to it gives us the following couplet :

Khaḍgadhārajitabhuvah *Śarabhātprāptajanmanah* /
nṛpateh Shrī Narendrasya śāsanam ripuśāsanam //

This couplet in the anustubh metre is our only source of information about Śarabha, the progenitor, of the Śarabhapurīya dynasty. In this couplet Mahārāja Narendra traces his descent from Śarabha who is not mentioned in any other source as a reigning monarch with any imperial title. The term Śarabha means 'a fabulous animal

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1 See Chapter One.

2 IHQ, XIX, pp. 139-46.

having eight legs, stronger than a lion'.[1] In our opinion the royal penigyrist has made an attempt to focus the miraculous origin of the dynasty. An animal with eight legs is itself a fantastic imagination and to trace descent from such a being is, indeed, a conscious attempt to mystify the real origin. We learn from Bāṇa's Harsha charita[2] that Śarabhaketu was a tribal chief who lived in the Vindhyan mountain in the seventh century A.D. and he was familiar with every creek and corner of Vindhyāṭavi. It may be mentioned in this context that the Pulindas, Kirātas, Śabaras and such other aboriginal tribes, according to Varāhamihīra, lived in the Vindhyan ranges.[3] One Pulinda chief called Pulindasena, according to Śailodbhava charters, dwelt in Mahendragiri, the home land of the Śabaras.[4] He was famous among the people of Kalinga for his power and prowess and, he was the progenitor of the Śailodbhava dynasty. Like the Śailodbhavas of Kangoda, the Bhanjas of Khijingakoṭa also trace their descent from the egg of a peahen (mayurāṇḍabhitva).[5] It is striking to note that in the early mediaeval period several such dynasties traced their descent from Sun, moon, rock, egg of a peahen and other in-animate objects. Such a legend is also prevalent among the Gonds of Madhya Pradesh.[6] They believe that their leader Lingo removed a piece of stone at Kachikop Lohagarh and consequently the Gonds came into being.[7] Our contention is that among tribal people such concept of miraculous origin was widely prevalent in ancient India. The name Śarabha of Śarabhapurīyan seals, well compared with Śarabhaketu of Bāṇa's Harsha-charita leaves, no doubt, that such a name as Śarabha was popular among the tribal

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1 See Chapter Three.

2 Harsha comes across vyaghraketu, son of the tributary chief Śarabhaketu, who introduces to him as one familiar with every creek and corner of the hill, Nirghāta nephew of the Vindhya chief Bhūkampa by name. Mookerji, R. K., Harsha, p. 26.

3 Brihatsamhitā, (ed) by V. Subramanya Sastri (1947), Vol. I, p. 173.

4 The Ocean of story (1924), Vol. I, pp. 102-136, Vol. II, p. 141.

5 Lines 4 and 5 of Bamannaghati plate of Raṇabhanja, JASB, XI (1871), pp. 161-67 ; IO, VI, p. 2.

6 Cunningham, IX, p. 158 (ASR).

7 Ibid.

people of Vindhyātavī. We are, therefore, inclined to believe that the progenitor of the Śarabhapurīya dynasty like Pulindasena of Kalinga, was a powerful tribal chief of South Koṡala. It is in the fitness of things that Śarabha of the Pipardula[1] and Kurud plates[2] has been identified with Śarabharāja the maternal grandfather of Goparāja of the posthumus Eran Inscription[3] of 510-11 A.D. The reference to the maternal grandfather of Goparāja in the aforesaid inscription indicates that Śarabharāja identified with Śarabha of the Śarabhapurīyan charters, was undoubtedly, famous for his power and pelf. It was only a man of his extraordinary ability who being very much familiar with the hills and dales of strategic importance of South Koṡala, could carve-out a kingdom of Śarabhapura in the dense forest region.

Towards the close of the fifth century A.D. the imperial designs of the Nalas had been foiled ; the power of the Guptas was fast declining and the Vākāṭakas after the last flicker shown by Harisena had also disappeared from the political scene. A state of political anarchy had prevailed over South Koṡala. It was in the midst of such a chaotic condition that the tribal chief Śarabha, identified with Śarabharāja of the Eran inscription, established the royal house of Śarabhapura which was destined to play an important role in the history and culture of South Koṡala for about two hundred years.

It may be pointed out in this context that according to the theory postulated by Manu[4] monarchy as an institution arose out of necessity. The anarchy caused by 'matsya-nyāya' led to the divine origin of kingship. God created the king to save the people in the crisis. Such a theory is also postulated in Buddhist literature.[5] We learn from Manusmriti that in the state of Nature when each attacked the other the people chose the 'great-elect' (Mahāsāmanta).[6] A

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1 IHQ, XIX, pp. 139-46 ff.

2 EI, XXXI, pp. 263-68 ff.

3 CII, III, p. 91.

4 Manusmriti, Chapter Three, Vrs. 3.

5 Diggha Nikāya, ref. Agganasuttanta, Vol. III, p. 93 (P. T. S. Edition).

6 At first there was the original state of Nature when every thing was perfect and people lived in comfort. When decline began in the perfect state of innocence in nature, people assembled together to elect a king—a powerful

critical study of the divine origin of kingship in ancient India reveals that in the fifth and sixth centuries of the Christian era many royal houses, with tribal origin in its bare nakedness, under the influence of Brāhminical form of Hinduism traced their descent from sun or moon or rock or egg of a peahen or any mystic being. In South Koṡala the Śarabhapurīyan monarchs who were really the successors of the tribal chief Śarabharāja claimed their mystic origin from Śarabha, the fantastic being with eight legs. At a later stage there was a conscious attempt to give an Āryan colour to the tribal origin of the family. The royal house under the influence of the Pancharātra system accepted Bhāgavata cult and patronised Brahminical form of Hinduism by donating land grants to the Brāhmaṇas of different gotras. Under the influence of the Brāhminical school they claimed that they belonged to Amarāryakūla. This is known to us from the Mallar plates,[1] issued by Vyāghrarāja from Prasannapura which was, obviously, a new capital founded by Prasannamātra of the Śarabhapurīya family. Lines 3 and 4 of the Mallar plates[2] describe Pravara-bhaṭṭṭāraka who is no other than Pravararāja of the Mallar plates,[3] as the moon in the sky of Amarārya family (Amarārya kūlāmbara shashīnah). In this copper plate grant Vyāghrarāja describes himself as the brother (anuja) of Pravara-bhaṭṭṭāraka (Pravararāja) and son of Jaya-bhaṭṭṭāraka (Jayarāja). This genealogy indicates that Jayarāja and Pravararāja also belonged to the dynasty called Amarāryakūla. Dr. Ajay Mitra Shastri,[4] however, holds a different view. He is of opinion that Jayabhaṭṭṭāraka and Pravara-bhaṭṭṭāraka of the Mallar plates who belonged to the Amarāryakūla were not identical with Jayarāja and Pravararāja of the Śarabhapurīya family. But Dr. D. C. Sircar,[5] the editor of the Mallar plates, is of opinion that Jayabhaṭṭṭāraka, Pravara-bhaṭṭṭāraka

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individual from among them. He was called the Great-elect (Mahāsāmanta). See above.

1 EI, XXXIV, p. 45 ff, Jain, B. C., Utkirna lekh (Raipur), pp. 174-75.

2 Ibid.

3 EI, XXXIV, pp. 51-52.

4 Prachya Pratibha (1978), Vol. I, pp. 25-31.

5 EI XXXIV, pp. 45-50.

and Vyāghrarāja who longed to the Amarāryakūla were Śarabhapurīyan monarchs. The charter of Vyāghrarāja on palaeographical grounds may be assigned to the early part of the seventh century A.D.[1] In our opinion when Pravararāja was ruling over the locality, issuing his charter found at Mallar, there cannot be a ruler of another dynasty in the same locality during the period. We are, therefore, inclined to believe that Vyāghrarāja, Pravarabhaṭṭāraka and Jaya-bhaṭṭāraka who claimed their descent from Amarāryakūla were no other than Śarabhapurīya monarchs. Dr. D. C. Sircar[2] rightly thinks that the expression Amarāryakūla looks like a Brahminical personal name and he points out that names of such families are often noticed in South Indian records.[3] He has drawn the attention of the scholars to the Bahmani plates of Bharatbala[4] which describe loka Prakāśā as a princess of South Kośala of the Amaraja family. It is almost certain that Amaraja family mentioned in the Bahmani plates is identical with Amarārya family, mentioned in the Mallar plates of Vyāghrarāja. Lines 28 and 29 of the Bahmani plates (vrs. 10) clearly reveal that Lokaprakāśā, queen of Bharatbala of Mekala, hailed from the illustrious Amarajakūla (Amarajakūlalā) of Kośala.[5] There is, no doubt, that Kośala in this context refers to South Kośala which was under the rule of the Śarbhapurīyas in the sixth and the early part of the seventh century A.D. It is further known to us from the Burhikhar copper plate grant[6] that Surabala, son of Bharatbala, donated the village Sangama, which he purchased from a rich merchant, to God Jayeśvara. It is quite likely, that the temple of Jayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka was built by

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1 Dr. D. C. Sircar assigns the plates to the sixth century A.D. (Ibid).

2 Sircar, D. C., Suc. of Sat I, p. 291.

3 The South Indian records such as—Hinginiberdi plates (EI, XXIX, p. 176) of Bibhuraja ; Khanpur plates of Mādhavavarman (Ibid, XXVII, pp. 316-17) and the Arga plates of Kapalivarman (Ibid, XXXI, p. 232) refer to Brahminical personal names.

4 Ibid, XXVII, p. 132.

5 EI, XXVI, pp. 132-45 ; IO, Vol. IV, p. 8-12
(Śrīmachchandrāṃśhukīrterbharatavala nṛpasyottamārajapatni ।
Jātāyākusalāyāṃamaraja kulajām kīrttimuchchairdadhānā ॥)

6 Studies in Epigraphic III (Mysore 1976), pp. 183-93 and plates by B. Sitaraman and M. J. Sharma.

Jayarāja himself to perpituate the memory of his own name. Dr. K. D. Bajpai[1] has rightly identified the village Sangama with the present village Tala, also called Sangama, located near the confluence of Maniari and Sivanath (Seonath) in the Bilaspur district. From this identification it is clear that Surabala who was the son of a South Kośalan princess, namely Lokaprakāśā, was interested to donate a village of South Kośala in favour of the temple of Jayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka, presumably because of the close family ties with the builder of the temple. It is not far fetched to suggest that Jayarāja who was possibly the builder of Jayeśvara was in all probability the father of Lokaprakāśā and maternal grandfather of Surabala. We hit upon this probable conclusion because the Bahmani plate of Bharatbala which refer to Lokaprakāśā as a scion of Amarajakula of South Kośala, is engraved in box-head characters which on palaeographic grounds has been rightly assigned to the early part of the seventh century A.D.[2] by Dr. D. C. Sircar. It is further striking to note that in view of the family relation between the Śarabhapurīyas of Kośala and the early Pāṇḍuvaṃsīs of Mekala at a later period Indrabala and Nannaraja of the Pāṇḍuvaṃsī line of Mekala served as most influential officers under Sudevarāja II and Sudevarāja I respectively as we learn from the Sirpur plates[3], Mahasamund[4] and the Kauvatal plates.[5] Thus, it is quite reasonable to infer that it was the Śarabhapurīya family of South Kośala which is referred to in the Bahmani plates as Amarajakūla, is identical with Amarāryakūla referred to in the Mallar plates of Vyāghrarāja.

At one time B. V. Krishna Rao[6] proposed an identification of the Śarabhapurīyas with the Śulikas of the Haraha inscription[7] of the time of Isānavarman. According to Dr. Hirananda Shastri[8]

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1 ABOI (Diamond Jubilee) Volume, 1977-78, p. 435.
2 EI, XXXIV, pp. 263-68.
3 Ibid, XXXI, pp. 103-07.
4 JESI, V, pp. 93-97.
5 EI, XXXI, p. 314-16.
6 EDA (1942), Krishna Rao, B. V., p. 647 ff.
7 EI, XIV, p. 110.
8 Krishna Rao, B. V., EDA (Madras, 1942), p. 647 ff.

the Śulikas are identical with the Śaulikas of Brihatsamhitā and he is of opinion that in the light of Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa the territory of the Śulikas is to be located in the South-eastern part of India alongwith Kalinga and Vidarbha. Following Dr. Shastri, Dr. B. V. Krishna Rao[1] supposed that the Śulika territory was probably the same as the territory of South Kośala and the lord of the Śulikas might be the same as the Śarabhapurīyan kings. But there is no doubt that Isanavarman having defeated the Vishnukuṇḍin monarch of Āndhradeśa subjugated the Śulikas and then inflicted a defeat on the Gauḍas.[2] Therefore, we are inclined to identify the Śulikas of Haraha inscription with the Sulkis of Orissa who had nothing to do with the Śarabhapurīyas.

We conclude our observation regarding the origin of the Śarabhapurīyas with our view that the dynasty in its inception had a tribal origin. Śarabha, the progenitor of the family, is possibly represented as a fantastic animal, for the purpose of indicating miraculous origin, which had become the order of the day. It is quite likely that this Śarabha, from whom Narendra claimed his descent, was really a tribal chief of the Vindhyas and it is not unreasonable to identify him with Śarabharāja of the Eran inscription. It was under the influence of the Brāhminical culture that at a later stage there was a fusion of the tribal and Āryan concept which led the royal penigyrist of the same family to trace the origin of the dynasty from Amaraja-kūla or Amara-Ārya-kūla. This sophisticated ideology was incorporated in Śarabhapurīyan polity obviously as a result of the Hinduised social promotion of the tribal chief Śarabha to that of a great Kshatrīya monarch of Āryan heritage.

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1 Krishna Rao, B.V., EDA (Madras, 1942), p. 647 ff.

2 EI, XIV, pp. 117, 120 (Vide Haraha inscription, Vrs. 13).

Chapter Five

CHRONOLOGY OF THE ŚARABHAPURĪYAS

The Śarabhapurīyas who are known to us from nineteen sets of copper plate grants, seem to have ruled over a considerable part of South Kośala in the sixth and seventh centuries of the Christian era. This is well indicated by the palaeography of their charters which belong to the Southern class of box-head variety, which is later than that of the Vākāṭakas inscriptions[1] and almost similar to that of Arang plates of Bhimsena II[2] dated in G.E. 181-82. Although the Śarabhapurīyas are known to have issued as many as nineteen copper plate grants, not a single one of them is dated in any known era. In the absence of internal evidences, we depend upon circumstantial evidences to fix the chronology of the Śarabhapurīyas.

It is known to us from inscriptional sources that the Vākāṭakas of Vatsagulma who had exercised their suzerainty over South Kośala under Harisena[3] at the expense of the Nalas disappeared from the political scene in the first decade of the sixth century A.D. In the chronology of the Vākāṭakas Harisena is usually assigned period from C 495 to C 520 A.D. It was at the end of Nala supremacy followed by the invasion of Harisena that the Śarabhapurīyas emerged in the lime light of history.

Śarabha, the progenitor of the dynasty, is usually identified with Śarabharāja who is referred to as the maternal grand-father of Goparāja in the Eran stone inscription[4] dated in the Gupta Era 191 corresponding to 510-11 A.D. The Eran inscription is, indeed, a mile stone in the chronology of the Śarabhapurīyans, as it indicates the beginning of their epoch. In accordance with the identification of Śarabha with Śarabharāja we may say that if Goparāja died in or about 510 A.D. Śarabha may be assigned the period from C 495 A.D.

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1 Mirashi, V. V., Vākāṭaka inscriptions (CII, IA).
2 EI, XXVI, p. 228.
3 ASWI, IV, p. 125.
4 CII, Vol. III, pp, 91-93.

to C 510 A.D. By the time he founded the kingdom of Śarabhapura he was an old man probably in his sixties. In that case he may be tentatively assigned a reign of about 15 years.

Śarabha was succeeded by his son Narendra[1] who according to his Kurud plates is known to have ruled at least 24 years. Narendra must have struggled hard for a protracted period and in all probability he fought against Bhimasena II[2] who flourished in 510 A.D. before he stabilized his political power. He may be assigned a period of 30 years i.e. C 510 A.D. to C 540 A.D.

Inscriptional evidences do not throw light regarding the immediate successor of Narendra. We learn from the inscriptions of Jayarāja that his father Prasanna flourished sometimes later than Narendra. Thus, there is a gap in the genealogy of the Śarabhapurīyas between Prasanna and Mahārāja Narendra. Prasanna of the inscriptions of Jayarāja is identical with Prasannamātra[3] whose gold coins have been found in large numbers from different parts of Madhya Pradesh and from Kalahandi district of Orissa. The coins of Prasannamātra bear the legend Sri Prasannamātra. From a large number of coins issued by him it is evident that he was a powerful monarch of his time. The gap in the genealogy between Narendra and Prasannamātra may be bridged with the help of several gold coins bearing the legend Mahendrāditya[4] found in different parts of Madhya Pradesh. The legend on this coin is in the typical box-head characters which is peculiar to South Kośala. Scholars are divided in opinion with regard to the identification of Mahendrāditya of these coins. While Prayagdayal[5] and V. P. Rhode[6] attribute these coins to Kumāragupta I, V. V. Mirashi[7] is of opinion that the coins were issued by the kings of

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1 IHQ, XIX, pp. 139-46 (Vide Pipardula copper plates) ; EI, XXXI, pp. 263-68 ; Studies in epigraphic I, pp. 182-83; JESI, V (1978), pp. 93-97.

2 See above.

3 IHQ, IX, p. 595 ; JAHRS, IV, p. 195 ; JNSI, XII, p. 8, XVI, p. 215, XXXIV, p. 84. (For details see Chapter Thirteen of the present work).

4 See preceeding Chapter Five of the present work.

5 NS, XLIV, p. 11.

6 JNSI., X, p. 137.

7 JNSI, XI, p. 109.

Rājarshitūlyakūla, Dr. P. L. Mishra[1] suggests that the coins should be attributed to king Mahendra of Allahabad Pillar inscription. However, A. Ghosh[2] and A. S. Altekar[3] have taken these identifications to be doubtful. A close and comparative study of these gold coins of Mahendrāditya with the gold coins of Prasannamātra has revealed to us great similarity in the two hoards. The coins of Mahendrāditya contain the legend written in box-head characters, which also characterise the legend of the coins of Prasannamātra. Invariably we notice seven dots in all the coins of Mahendrāditya and the same seven dots are also noticed in the coins of Prasannamātra. Symbols of Śamkha, Chakra and Garuḍa which are marked on the coins of Mahendrāditya are also found in the coins of Prasannamātra. Another interesting similarity in the two sets of coins is that there is a prominent straight line like a diametre dividing the coins as it were into two halves. These observations lead us to propose that in all probability Mahendrāditya was a predecessor of Prasannamātra and a successor of Narendra in the Śarabhapurīya line. Otherwise we cannot explain as to how the coins bearing the legend Mahendrāditya in box-head characters were found in South Kośala during the period. It may be pointed out in this context that the coins of Mahendrāditya cannot be attributed to Kumāragupta I[4] because no identified coin of Kumāragupta bears a legend in box-head characters[5] and in none of the coins of Kumāragupta the reverse is plain. On the reverse of the coins of Kumāragupta we find the representation of Lakshmī linked with Garuḍa and such other features, and often the legend is found on the same side.[6] But in the coins of Mahendrāditya which are some times confused with those of Kumāragupta I there is no depiction whatsoever on the reverse. Nishar Ahmed[7] who has made a critical study of the coins of Mahendrāditya

1 IHQ, XXXVII, p. 2.
2 NS., LXVI, pp. 21-22.
3 JNSI., X., pp. 139-40 ; XI, p. 100.
4 NAHO (I978), II, pp. 26-30.
5 JNSI, XXXIII, Part II, p. 115 ff.
6 Mookerji, R. K., Gupta Empire, pp. 70-88 ; Altekar A. S., Coinage of the Gupta Empire, pp. 213-15.
7 JNSI, XI, p. 109.

is also of the opinion that the coins do not belong to Kumāragupta I. He has rightly pointed out that the coins of Mahendrāditya have a blank reverse and they are exclusively found in South Kośala while the Gupta coins are found throughout their empire. He has also observed that in the huge Bayana hoards where we notice a large number of coins of Kumāragupta I not a single coin in that hoard bears resemblance with any one coin of Mahendrāditya. In view of this conspicuous differences in the coins of Mahendrāditya and Kumāragupta we are not in a position to assign the coins of Mahendrāditya to Kumāragupta. We cannot assign the coins of Mahendrāditya with Mahendra of South Kośala[1] mentioned in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription because king Mahendra, who should be identified with Mahārāja Mahendra of the Malhar seal[2] has engraved his name in the said seal in the Gupta variety. We cannot identify Mahendrāditya of our coins as a supposed king of Nala family[3] because the coins of Mahendrāditya have no resemblance so far with the coins of the Nalas which bear the emblem 'bull'. In the light of these circumstantial evidences we propose that Mahendrāditya whose coins exactly tally with the coins of Prasannamātra, was in all probability a predecessor of Prasannamātra and a successor of Narendra. In the chronology of the Śarabhapurīyas Mahendrāditya may be tentatively assigned a period of twenty five years i.e. C. 540 A.D. to C. 565 A.D.

Mahendrāditya seems to have been succeeded by Prasannamātra whose coins closely resemble those of Mahendrāditya, the relation between the two is not known. It is probable that Prasannamātra was the son and successor of Mahendrāditya. Prasannamātra is known to us from his large number of gold coins found in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh as well as from the inscriptions of Jayarāja and Sudevarāja. In the coins he is mentioned as Prasannamātra and in the inscription he is simply mentioned as Prasanna. Although there is no epithet like Mahārāja associated with Prasanna in the

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1 P. L. Mishra attributes the coins of Mahendrāditya to king Mahendra of Kośala (IHQ, XXXVII, p. 2).

2 ABORI (1977-78), p. 437.

3 IHQ, XXXVI, pp. 247-59.

Śarabhapurīyan inscriptions, there is no doubt that Prasanna is same as Prasannamātra. We think, Prasanna is just mentioned without epithets only because such an expression fits in with the Anustubh Chhanda in which the legend of the Śarabhapurīyan seals were composed. As no single copper plate of Prasannamātra has yet been discovered we have no evidence about any of his regnal year. In the absence of such evidence we may only presume that in all probability he ruled for thirty years, from C. 565 A.D. to C. 595 A.D.

Prasannamātra was succeeded by his son Jayarāja who is known to us from his Angura plates[1] (3rd regnal year), Mallar plates[2] (5th regnal year), Arang plates[3] (5th regnal year) and Mallar plates[4] (9th regnal year). In the seals attached to these copper plates we find a couplet which reveals that Jayarāja happened to be the son of Prasanna (Prasanna*tanaya*syaiva)[5] while editing the Arang plates Fleet[6] read Prasannahridaya in place of Prasannatanaya. Dr. D. C. Sircar[7] seems to have correctly read the passage Prasannatanaya which clearly indicates that Jayarāja was the son of Prasannamātra. At one time B. V. Krishna Rao,[8] S. N. Rajguru,[9] and D. C. Sircar[10] held the view that Prasannamātra had another son called Mānamātra who is represented in the inscriptions of Sudevarāja I as a moon born out of the ocean of Prasanna (Prasannārṇavasambhuta mānamātrendu janmanah)[11] but we do not possess any copper plate of a separate king called Mānamātra whereas we possess four copper plate grants of Jayarāja. Again from the expression that Mānamātra was born as a moon from the ocean of Prasanna, it is symbolically indicated that he was the only son of Prasannamātra whereas from the inscriptions of Jayarāja

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1 JNSI, IV, pp, 70-75.
2 EI, XXXIII, pp. 155-57.
3 CII, III, pp. 191-95.
4 EI, XXXIV, pp. 28-31.
5 Prāchya Pratībhā I, p. 26.
6 CII, III, pp, 191-95.
7 See above.
8 Krishna Rao, B. V., EDA, p. 647 ff.
9 IO, Vol. IV, p. 321.
10 See above.
11 Vide Sudevarājas' inscriptions, See Chapter One.

it is clear that he was the son of Prasanna. Therefore, it seems that Jayarāja and Mānamātra are identical. Again it is known to us from the Mallar plates[1] of Vyāghrarāja that Pravarabhaṭṭāraka who in our opinion is identical with Pravara-rāja, has been described as a son of Jayabhaṭṭāraka who can be identified with Jayarāja in logical sequence. Pravara-rāja refers to himself as a son of Mānamātra in his Thakurdiya plates[2] and Pravara-bhaṭṭāraka identified with Pravara-rāja has been represented in the Mallar plates as the son of Jayabhaṭṭāraka identified with Jayarāja. Thus, it is clear that Jayabhaṭṭāraka, identified with Jayarāja, is no other than Mānamātra. We may, in the light of the aforesaid discussion, suggest that Mānamātra was only another name of Jayarāja. The last known regnal year of Jayarāja is Samvat 9 (vide Mallar plates).[3] However, it is indicated by the legend of his inscription that he ruled with full glory for a long time and as such he may be assigned a reign of about 25 years from C. 595 to C. 625 A.D.

Jayarāja alias Mānamātra was succeeded by his son Sudevarāja I who is known to us from his Khariar plates[4] (regnal year 2), Sirpur plates[5] (regnal year 7), Arang plates[6] (regnal year 8), Raipur plates[7] (regnal year 10), the incomplete Sarangarh plates[8] and the damaged Sirpur plate.[9] Most of the scholars who have worked on the genealogy of the Śarabhapurīyas hold the view that there is only one Sudevarāja who issued two more copper plate grants (Mahasamund plates[10] of regnal year 3 and the Kauvatal plates[11] of regnal year 7 in addition to the six charters mentioned above. We have at this stage deviated from the traditional genealogy set up by the other

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1 EI., XXXIV, pp. 45-50.
2 EI., XXII, pp. 15-23.
3 EI., XXXIV, pp. 28-31.
4 EI., IX, pp. 170-73.
5 EI., XXXI, pp. 103-08.
6 EI., XXIII, pp. 18-23.
7 CII, III, pp. 196-200.
8 EI., IX, pp. 281-85.
9 IHQ., X, p. 101.
10 JESI., V.
11 EI., XXXI, pp. 314-16.

scholars. We have no doubt that the Mahasamund and the Kauvatal plates were issued by Sudevarāja II who belong to the collateral branch of the Śarabhapurīyas who ruled with their capital at Śrīpura. Out of the eight plates so far known to have been issued by Sudevarāja Mahasamund and Kauvatal plates refer to Sudevarāja as the son of Durgarāja[1] while the other plates without making any reference to Durgarāja only refer to Mānamātra as the father of Sudevarāja. These informations led all earlier scholars to identify Mānamātra with Durgarāja. But a close study has led us to indicate that the donor of Mahasamund and Kauvatal plates is different from the donor of the other plates of Sudevarāja.[2] This contention of ours is based on the following points : Firstly, Mānamātra as we have discussed earlier is identical with Jayarāja whose son and successor Sudevarāja I had nothing to do with Durgarāja whose name does not find place in his charters. Secondly, Mahasamund and Kauvatal plates are issued from Śrīpura while the other plates of Sudevarāja are issued from Śarabhapura. As we shall have to say more about it, Sudevarāja of Mahasamund and Kauvatal plates, who was the son of Durgarāja belonged to the junior line of the Śarabhapurīyas who ruled with their capital at Śrīpura. Thirdiy, the legend in the seal of Mahasamund and Kauvatal plates is different from the other plates of Sudevarāja. Fourthly, the engraver of the Mahasamund and Kauvatal plates was Golasimha who was also the engraver of the Thakurdiya[3] and Mallar plates[4] of Pravara-rāja, which were issued from Śrīpura. The other plates of Sudevarāja were engraved by a different engraver, called Droṇasiṃha.

These observations of ours make it clear that the donor of Khariar, Sirpur, Raipur, Sarangarh and Arang plates was Sudevarāja I who was son of Mānamātra alias Jayarāja of the main line of Śarabhapurīya-family while the donor of Mahasamund and Kauvatal plates was Sudevarāja II, son of Durgarāja of the Junior line of Śrīpura. The last known regnal year of Sudevarāja I is Samvat 10 (vide

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1 See above.

2 Ibid.

3 EI., XXII, pp. 15-23.

4 Ibid, XXXIV, pp. 51-52 (regnal year 3).

Raipur plates). However, like his illustrious predecessor, he too may be assigned a long period of about 25 years from C. 625 A.D to C. 650 A.D.

Sudevarāja I was succeeded by his brother Pravararāja, known to us from his Thakurdiya plates (Regnal year 3) and the Mallar plates (Regnal year 3). D. C. Sircar[1] and S. N. Rajguru[2] are of opinion that Pravarabhaṭṭāraka, son of Jaya-bhaṭṭāraka of the Mallar plates of Vyāghararāja, was Pravararāja I while Pravararāja, son of Mānamātra of the Thakurdiya and the Mallar plates was Pravararāja II. But as we have shown above Jayarāja and Mānamātra are identical, and as such there is no scope for two Pravararājas in our scheme of genealogy of the Śarabhapurīyas. Pravararāja may be tentatively assigned a reign of about 25 years from C. 625 A.D. to C. 650 A.D.

Pravararāja seems to have been succeeded by Durgarāja whose relation with him is not known. Durgarāja of the Mahasamund and Kauvatal plates has been identified by all the scholars with Mānamātra. But as we have discussed earlier Durgarāja who belonged to the junior line of Śrīpura cannot be identified with Mānamātra. He also does not appear to have succeeded Sudevarāja I because his son Sudevarāja II like Pravararāja belonged to the junior line of Śrīpura. The charters of Pravararāja and Sudevarāja II were engraved by one and the same person. Although Durgarāja seems to have succeeded Pravararāja, the relation between the two is not known. He may be taken to be the son of Pravararāja on hypothetical considerations. A reign of about fifteen years from C. 650 A.D. to C. 665 A.D. may be assigned to him.

Durgarāja was succeeded by his son Sudevarāja II who was the last known king of the Śarabhapurīya line. It is interesting to note that one Indrabala[3] who finds mention in the Kauvatal and Mahasamund plates of Sudevarāja II was a powerful officer who has been referred to as Sarvādhikārādhikrita. In our opinion this Indrabala is identical with the Pāṇḍuvaṃsī king Indrabala of the Bonda plates

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1 EI, XXXIV, pp. 45-49.

2 IO, IV, p. 321.

3 Vide line 16, Bonda plates, IO, IV, p. 70 ff ; EI, XXXIV, pp. 111-116.

of Mahāśiva Tivaradeva. We know further from the genealogy of the Pāṇḍuvaṃsīs that Indrabala was succeeded by his son Nanna[1] who in our opinion is identical with the prince of the same name mentioned in the Sirpur plates of Sudevarāja I. Indrabala who was the Dūtaka of Sudevarāja II was succeeded by his son Nanna who in his turn was succeeded by Tivaradeva known to us from the Bonda,[2] Rajim,[3] Baloda,[4] and Adabhara plates.[5] Tivaradeva who has been described in the aforesaid plates as the lord of entire Kośala and Utkala, is also known to have been defeated by the Śailodbhava king Dharmarāja II alias Śrīmānabhīta who flourished in the last quarter of the 7th century A.D. The synchronism of Dharmarāja II and Tivaradeva in the last quarter of the 7th century A.D. is a land mark in our scheme of chronology which indicates that the Śarabhapurīyas fell from political power in the last quarter of the 7th century A.D. sometimes after Śudevarāja II. Sudevarāja II possibly ruled for a period of about two decade from C. 665 A.D. to C. 685 A.D.

On the basis of the above discussion we reconstruct the genealogy[6] of the Śarabhapurīyas as given below :

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1 EI, XXVII, p. 290.
2 CII, III, p. 291 ff.
3 EI, VII, p. 106 ff.
4 EI, XXXI, P. 221.
5 Vide Nivina, Chandesvar, Ranapur, Banapur, Puri and Kondal plates of Dharmarāja (IO,-I Part II, pp. 206-40).
6 Symbol I indioates the relation of father and son. Symbol II indlcates that the relation is not known.

Śarabha (Śarabharāja) (C. 495 A. D.—C. 510 A.D)

|

Mahārāja Narendra (C. 510 AD.—C. 540 A.D.)

|

Mahendrāditya (C. 540 A.D.—C. 565 A.D.)

|

Prasannamātra (C. 565 A.D.—C. 595 A.D.)

|

Jayarāja alias Mānamātra (C. 595 A.D.—C. 625 A.D.)

| | |

Sudevarāja I = Rājyamahādevī (C. 625 A.D.— C. 650 A.D

Pravararāja (C. 625 A.D.— C. 650 A.D.)

Vyāghrarāja

|

Durgarāja (C. 650 A.D.—C. 665 A.D)

|

Sudevarāja II (C. 665 A.D.—C. 685 A.D)

Chapter Six

RISE OF THE ŚARABHAPURĪYAS

The rise of Śarabhapura in the last quarters of the fifth century A.D. is a land mark in the history of South Kośala. The Nalas, who had emerged as powerful potentates in the fourth and the fifth centuries of the Christian era had received serious reverses from the Vākāṭakas of Vidarbha. Their policy of imperial expansion as far as Naṇdivardhana and Prayāga had been paid back in its own coins. Although the Nala king Bhavadattavarman established temporary suzerainty over the capital of the Vākāṭakas and issued the Rithapur plates[1] from Naṇdivardhana. Narendrasena, the contemporary Vākāṭaka king succeeded in the long run to drive out the Nalas from his capital and also exercised his sway over South-Kośala.[2] Even Prithivīsena II seems to have exercised his supremacy over Kośala[3] for a considerable period.

With the rise of Harisena, Vākāṭakas of Vatsagulma established their hegemony over South Kośala. Ajanta cave inscription[4] reveals that Harisena marched against the countries like Kalinga, Kośala, Mekala, Avanti, Lāṭa, Gurjara and Āndhradeśa. In the midst of the Vākāṭaka invasion of Harisena the Nalas, undoubtedly, lost their hold over South Kośala, although Prithivīrāja, Viruparāja and Vilāsatunga as we learn from the Rajim stone inscription,[5] are known to have flourished in South Kośala in the 8th century A.D. Probably as feudatory chiefs under the Pāṇḍuvaṃsīs of South Kośala.

As we have discussed earlier, right from the time of Nala invasion of Naṇdivardhana, the Guptas who were the allies of the Vākāṭakas, appear to be very much concern in the affairs of South Kośala. Bhavadattavarmans' appearance at Prayāga after the conquest of

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1 Rajaguru, S. N., IO., Vol. I, part II, pp. 89-93.

2 Vide Balaght plates of Prithivīsena II, EI., IX, pp. 267-71.

3 Idid.

4 ASWI., IV, p. 125.

5 Rajguru, S. N., I.O., Vol. I, Part II, pp. 98-103.

Naṇdivardhana, must have caused great anxiety to the contemporary Gupta king Skaṇdagupta. We have also suggested that Skaṇdagupta must have taken all steps to drive Bhavadattavarman from Prayāga and pursued him as far as the heart of Kośala. Nareṇdrasena seems to have been substantially helped by Skaṇdagupta and in subjugating the Nalas who are known to have deserted the capital Puṣkarī[1] in utter helplessness. Narendrasena alone possibly did not cause such devastation in the Nala territory. It is interesting to note that we have some hoards of coins of Kumāragupta II[2] alias Kramāditya the successor of Skaṇdagupta at Pitaiband in Raipur district and at Kulia[3] in the Durg district of Madhya Pradesh. We also learn from the Khoh copper plate grant of Mahārāja Hastin[4] that in the Gupta Era 156-475 A.D., the territoty of the Paribrājakas of Madhya-Bhārata was incorporated in the territory of the Guptas (Guptarājyabhuktam). In view of these evidences we think that during the Nala invasion Skaṇdagupta actually came to the rescue of Narendrasena and succeeded in establishing his suzerain influence over a part of South Kośala. The coins of his successor Kumāragupta II alias Kramāditya found in the Raipur and Durg districts of Madhya Pradesh substantiate our presumption and indicate that in all probability the courses of South Kośala were also under the suzerain influence of Kumāragupta in or about 475 A.D. It cannot be said whether Kośala had to do anything with Budhagupta. However, after the death of Budhagupta in 494 A.D. when the Gupta Empire was partitioned, feudatory rulers declared independence taking advantage of the disintegration of the Gupta Empire. It is difficult to say anything about Gupta supremacy over Kośala during this period. It was, indeed, a period of chaos and anarchy in the history of South Kośala. Even if there was any overlordship of the Guptas, it was only nominal. At such a critical period Harisena of the Basim branch of the Vākāṭaka famity caused a consternation in South Kośala through his extensive campaigns. Harisenas' hold over South

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1 Ibid, pp. 94-97.

2 JNSI, XXII, p. 185 ff.

3 Prāchya Pratībhā (1977), Vol. I, pp. 69-74.

4 Sircar, D. C., Sel. Ins. I, p. 98, Classical Age, p. 30.

Kośala also appears to be short lived. He swept over South Kośala like a storm, and he had no time to consolidate Vākāṭaka-rule over South Kośala. It was during this period that there was the rise of Śarabhapura under the leadership of Śarabha, identified with Śarabharāja.[1]

Śarabha (C. 495 A.D.—C. 510 A.D.)

Towards the close of the fifth century A.D. when the Gupta political power and the Vākāṭaka supremacy was fast declining Śarabha appeared in the lime light of history as the founder of a new royal house, known to historians as the Śarabhapurīya dynasty. This progenitor of the Śarabhapurīya dynasty is known to us from the Pipardula,[2] and Kurud[3] plates of Mahārāja Narendra. The Rawan plate[4] of Narendra being incomplete does not reveal anything about the founder of the new royal house. It is very probable that Śarabha is identical with Śarabharāja, the maternal grandfather of Goparāja of the time of Bhānugupta. The reference too, a maternal grandfather, indicates that the prominence of Śarabharāja was responsible for this type of reference. Śarabharāja was, undoubtedly, a tribal chief like Śarabhaketu of Vindhyāṭavi mentioned by Bāṇa in Harsha-charita. Being associated with Goparāja he was very much aware of the declining power of the Guptas and the Vākāṭakas towards the end of the fifth century A.D. It is probable that during Harisenas' invasion of South Kośala he might have rendered military aid to the Vākāṭaka conqueror and secured his support for his ascendancy over South Kośala. We think that in order to resist the ramnent Nala political power he must have chosen the site of his new capital, named after him, not far from the northern border of the Nala territory. In our opinion (vide Chapter IV) Śarabha founded the hill-fort of Śarabhapura in the forest region of Maraguda, near Khariar in the Kalahandi district of Orissa. It seems that Śarabha who was in all probability a loyal chieftain of the Guptas at one time continued to acknowledge their nominal

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1 See Chapter One, Two and Four of the present work.
2 IHQ, XIX, pp. 139-46.
3 EI, XXXI, pp. 263-68.
4 JESI, (1978), V, pp. 93-97.

suzerainty in a respectful manner during his lifetime. This is indicated by the Kurud plates which reveal that at an earlier period Paramabhaṭṭāraka[1] who was obviously a Gupta over-lord, while taking a sacred bath in the Ganges had donated the village Keśavaka to Bhasrutasvāmīn for the increase of his own merit by issuing a charter written on palm-leaves (Tālapatra shāsana), as the charter further reveals, the palm leaves charter was burnt in a conflagration in the donees residence. As such, Mahārāja Narendra reissued a charter in a copper plate grant by confirming the earlier donation. Confirmation of a grant made by an earlier Gupta monarch indicates that in the time of Śarabha the Gupta suzerainty, however nominal it might be, was still honoured in South Kośala. Dr. M. G. Dixit[2] presumed that Paramabhaṭṭārakapāda of the Kurud plates was no other than Śarabha. He further presumed that Śarabha has donated the village Keśavaka while taking a bath in the Mahanadi which was represented as a Gangā in the Kurud plates. But Śarabha could not have used the title of Paramabhaṭṭārakapāda which could only be used by the Guptas during that period. The influence of the Imperial Guptas over South Kośala is indicated by the discovery of the coins of Kramāditya in the Raipur and Durg districts of Madhya Pradesh.[3]

The rise of Śarabhapura synchronised with the rise of Mekala as a contiguous territory in the last quarter of the fifth century A.D. The Malga plates of Indrarāja, the Bahmani plates[4] of Bharatabala and the Burhikhar plates[5] of Surabala clearly reveal that while the Pāṇḍuvaṃsīs began their ascendancy over Mekala, the royal house of Śarabhapura, called Amarāryakūla, began its ascendancy over South Kośala. The relation between the two royal houses seems to be quite cordial leading to matrimonial alliance[6] in the reign of Bharatabala. From the genealogy of the Pāṇḍuvaṃsīs of Mekala it

1 EI, XXXI, p. 263 ff (Lines 4-6).
2 Ibid.
3 JASB (NS), XLIV, p. 309, JNSI, X, p. 137, XVI, pp. 216-17 ; OHRJ, I, p. 137.
4 EI, XXVII, p. 132.
5 Studies in Epigraphy, III, pp. 183-93.
6 EI, XXVI, p. 140 ; (Studies in Epigraphy, III, pp. 183-193).

is learnt that Jayabala or Indrarāja was a contemporary of Śarabha, the founder of Śarabhapura.

Narenda (C. 510 A.D.—C. 540 A.D.)

Śarabha, identified with Śarabharāja, was succeeded by his son Nareṇdra who is known to us from his Pipardula, Kurud and Rawan plates. Unlike Iṇdrarāja Śrīsāmanta of Mekala, Nareṇdra was an independent and powerful ruler who assumed the title Mahārāja. Although he was still respectful towards Gupta suzerainty he was no more a subordinate of Paramabhaṭṭāraka. He issued the Kurud copper plate grant for augmentation of his own merits and never described himself as Paramabhaṭṭāraka pādānudhyāta ; on the contrary he refers to himself as mātāpitru pādānudhyāta. Having stabilized his position at Śarabhapura he seems to have extended his territory in the north-western direction indicated by the find spots of his inscription in the Raipur and Raigarh districts of Madhya Pradesh. The places mentioned in his records are identified with the villages located in the Raipur, Bilaspur and Raigarh districts. While his Pipardula plates are dated in his 3rd regnal year Kurud plates are dated in his 24th regnal year. As we learn from the Kurud plates as late as his 24th regnal year he was busily engaged in campaigns against the existing ruling families of South Kośala. His Kurud plates were issued from victorious military camp (Vijayaskaṇḍhāvara) at Tilakeśvara. We propose to identify Tilakeśvara with the present Tala where we find two Siva Temples[1] of the Sarabhapurīya period. It seems that having severed his allegiance towards the Vākātakas he had asserted his sovereign status over Kośala by subjugating the existing local chiefs. We learn from the Arang copper plate[2] grant, dated in 182 GE=501 A.D. that Mahārāja Bhīmasena II of Rājarshitūlyakūla ruled over a portion of South Kośala in or about the first quarter of the sixth century A.D. The date of the Arang plates has been a controversial issue. While Hiralal[3] reads the date as 282 GE,

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1 ABORI (Diamond Jubilee Volume 1977-78), pp. 433-37.

2 EI, XXVI, p. 288, Studies in Indology, pp. 252-57.

3 EI, IX, p. 342 ff ; ICPB, No. 170, pp. 94-96, IHO, XXII, pp. 62-63.

V. V. Mirash[1] reads it as Gupta era 181. If we accept the reading of Hiralal we cannot explain the existence of Bhimasena II in the presence of rising Śarabhapurīyas who had definitely extended the territory in that region of South Kośala where the charter of Bhimasena has been found. We know from the said charter that before Mahārāja Bhimasena five generations of kings of his family had already ruled over the present Raipur region of Madhya Pradesh for about one century. In such a case we cannot justify the expansion of the Śarabhapurīya kingdom in the Raipur and Bilaspur districts of Madhya Pradesh in the sixth century A.D. We are, therefore, inclined to accept the reading of Mirashi with regard to the date of Bhimasena and suggest that Bhimasena II who is known to have ruled over the Arang region in 501 A.D. possibly ruled for about 25 years in the first quarter of the sixth century A.D. In that case he must have been a contemporary and a rival of Mahārāja Nareṇdra during the policy of expansion adopted by the latter in the North-Western part of South Kośala. Arang copper plate[2] grant is the isolated charter which says all about Rājarshitūlyakūla after the reign of Bhimasena II, after whom nothing more is known about Rājarshitūlyakūla. Therefore, we presume that Mahārāja Nareṇdra having vanquished Mahārāja Bhimasena II in the Arang region had to fight against other local chiefs for a protracted period in course of which he regranted the village Keśavaka in the Chullādasīmā-bhoga from his victorious military camps of Tilakeśvara. His twenty-fourth regnal seems to have marked the climax of his policy of imperial expansion of the Śarabhapurīya kingdom. His conquest of a considerable part of South Kośala is indicated by the legend of the seal in his charters. The couplet in the legend reads his victory over his enemies and conquest of territory by the sharp edge of his sword.[3] The village Keśavaka regranted by him in the Kurud plates

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1 See above.

2 EI, XXXI, p. 228 ff.

3 Vide seal of Kurud plates of Narendra

L. 1 Khaḍgadhārajitabhuvah..... ।

L. 2 ṇrpatesshri Narendrasya shāsanam ṛpu shāsanam ॥

EI, XXXI, pp. 263-68.

is identified with the modern village of the same name, situated at a distance of about 5 miles to the south-east of Mahasamund. Chullādasīmābhoga from where village Keśavaka had been granted has also been identified in the Mahasamund Sub-Division with the present village Charod.[1] Besides, Nareṇdra is also known to have donated the village Sarkarāpadraka identified with the village Sakara[2] in the Nandapura-bhoga, which is the same as Nandagaon[3] in the Bilaspur district. It is further known to us from the Rawan plate that Mahārāja Nareṇdra donated the village Arāmaka in the Manṭrāja-bhukti.[4] P. Gupta[5] proposes to identify the aforesaid village with the place of the same name mentioned in the Indore plates[6] of Pravarasena II and locates the same in the vicinity of Kosamba in the Balaghat district of Madhya Pradesh. We have, however, identified Ārāmaka of the Rawan plates with Ārāmavijayakaṭaka of Gaintala plates of Janmejaya Mahābhāvagupta. The same place may be identified with present Rampur in the Bolangir district of Orissa. We may point out in this context that it was located in the Manṭarājabhukti which was so named after the King Manṭarāja who ruled over Kaurala, same as Karla of the Bolangir district, according to the Allahabad Pillar inscription. In view of this identification we may say that a considerable parts of Bolangir district of Orissa was also conquered by Mahārāja Nareṇdra in course of his expansion of the Śarabhapurīya territory.

While Mahārāja Nareṇdra was busy in the expansion of his territory in the north and north western direction in the second quarter of the sixth century A.D. the mighty Gupta empire which was fast declining collapsed in the middle of the sixth century A.D. The rising Śarabhapurīyan monarch who had intimate knowledge on the decline of the Gupta empire, had, obviously, made himself independent of what ever control the Guptas had over South Kośala during the reign of Śarabha in the beginning of the sixth century A.D.

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1 Vide Chapter Two of the present work.
2 GAII, p. 212.
3 MKHS, II, p. 24 f.
4 JESI, VI, pp. 44-45.
5 Gupta, P., GAII (1973), p. 132.
6 EI, XXIV, p. 55.

While Mahārāja Bhimasena II uses the Gupta Samvat in 501 A.D. Mahārajā Nareṇdra used his only regnal year is in his charters. However, he had only a sense of reverential recognition of the suzerainty of the Guptas which is indicated, by his confirmation of the earlier grant made by a Gupta overlord (Paramabhaṭṭāraka) in the Chullāda sīmābhoga. Unlike the feudatory chiefs Svāmidās[1], Rudradāsa and Bhullunda, he never described himself as Paramabhaṭṭāraka pādānudhyāta. In fact he was the first great conqueror of the Śarabhapurīya-line who threw off the foreign yoke and expanded the territories by the strength of his sword.

1 Sel. Ins., Sircar, p. 37

Chapter Seven

ASCENDANCY OF THE ŚARABHAPURĪYAS

The ascendancy of Śarabhapura synchronised with the fall of the Gupta empire in the middle of the sixth century A.D. With the fall of the Imperial Guptas the Pāṇḍuvamsīs of Mekala and the Śarabhapurīyas of Koṡala emerged as two powerful dynasties in the central Indian politics of sixth century A.D. The Vākātakas of Vidarbha and Vatsagulma and Rājarshitūlyakūla of South Koṡala had disappeared from the political scene of Central India. The Śarabhapuriyans by maintaining alliance with the neighbouring Pāṇḍuvaṃsīs of Mekala[1] stabilised their political postion of Śarabhapura and launched a bid for supremacy over South-Koṡala in the forthcoming centuries.

Mahendrāditya (C. 540 A.D. – C. 565 A.D.)

Mahārāja Nareṇdra was the first great king of Śarabhapura line who by his own prowess had uplifted Śarabhapura from obscurity to a rising power. The foundation of the empire was followed by a period of expansion and consolidation in the succeeding four generations. Under Mahendrāditya, Prasannamātra, Jayarāja alias Mānamātra and Sudevarāja I the weight of Śarabhapurīya ascendancy was felt over the length and breadth of South Koṡala and the country as a whole was prosperous and opulent.

Mahārāja Nareṇdra, according to our scheme of chronology, was succeeded by king Mahendrāditya whose name is not found in the genealogy of the Śarabhapurīya seals. He is only known to us from his gold coins[2] which are found scattered in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. In our opinion he is not identical with Kumāragupta I alias Mahendrāditya whose coins are conspicuously distinct and different from those of Mahendrāditya which are found

1 Vide the Bahmani plates of king Bharatabala and Burhikhar plates of Surabala ; see Chapter One of the present work.

2 See Chapter Four of our present work ; NAHO (1978), II.

only in South-Kośala.[1] From the epigraphical records of the Śarabhapurīyas we know that between Mahārāja Nareṇdra and Prasannamātra there is indication of a gap of one generation. A close and comparative study of the coins of Prasannamātra and those of Mahendrāditya has led us to find out closest resemblance between them. Dr. A. S. Altekar[2] is also inclined to think that the coins of Mahendrāditya were not issued by the Gupta emperor Kumāragupta I. As we have discussed earlier, unlike the coins of Kumāragupta I, the coins of Mahendrāditya were current only in South Kośala and they are not found anywhere else in India. The coins of Mahendrāditya bearing the emblem of Garuḍa with outstretched wings are inscribed in the local box-head character of South Kośala and not in the normal Brahmi script of North India. Dr. A. S. Altekar has rightly raised the question. If South Kośala was under Kumāragupta I why should not the Khairtal hoards contain some gold coins of the ordinary common type like the Archer and Horseman ones ?[3] In fact the gold coins of Gupta monarchs were not local in character. In view of the similarity of the coins of Mahendrāditya and those of Prasannamātra Dr. Altekar observes[4], "It is most probable that the coins of this type were issued by the king Mahendrāditya of some local dynasties of South Kośala who borrowed the type from Prasannamātra". But as we have shown earlier Mahendrāditya who was certainly a local king of South Kośala only appears to be ruler of the Śarabhapurīya family. Again we do not agree to Dr. Altekar's view that Mahendrāditya imitated the coins of Prasannamātra. Because in the Śarabhapurīyan genealogy Mahendrāditya can be placed only before Prasannamātra and after Mahārāja Nareṇdra. However we agree with Dr. Altekar that the coins of Prasannamātra and those of Mahendrāditya were issued with close proximity of time in the sixth century A.D. In the light of these observations we conclude that the model set by Mahendrāditya in the numismatics of South Kośala was followed by Prasannamātra.

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1 Ibid.

2 Altekar, A. S., The coinage of the Gupta Empire, pp. 213-15.

3 See above.

4 Ibid.

The kingdom of Śarabhapura which had already expanded in the North-Western direction as far as Raipur under Mahārāja Narendra was further spread towards Chanda district of Maharashtra and Durg district of Madhya Pradesh under Mahendrāditya. Mahendrāditya was the first king of the royal house of Śarabhapura who minted gold coins which have been found in large numbers in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. We have got a large number of gold coins from Khairtal and Pitaibandh in the Raipur district (Madhya Pradesh), Chanda district of Maharashtra, from Madanpur-Rampur in Kalahandi district of Orissa and from Kulia in the Durg district of Madhya Pradesh. Altogether numismats have come across one hundred and five gold coins of Mahendrāditya from different parts of South Kośala.[1] All these coins are struck repousse and are blank on the reverse. On the obverse of these coins within dotted border in the upper half there is representation of Garuḍa with upstretched wings and chakra surmounted by crescent on left and Śaṅkha on the right ; below in the lower half there is the legend Śrī Mahendrāditya, with a solitary letter 'U' below the legend. The average weight of each of the coins of Khairtal hoard is 20 grains. The coins minted by Mahendrāditya in South Kośala when compared with those of the Gupta gold coins are found to be made of debased gold. However, minting of gold coins under Mahendrāditya was itself an indication of the economic prosperity of the kingdom of Śarabhapura. The provenance of the coins also indicates that in the far-flung territory of Śarabhapura, stretching from Kalahandi district of Orissa upto the Chanda district of Maharashtra, the authority of Mahendrāditya was honoured every where.

Prasannamātra (C. 565 A.D. — C. 595 A.D.)

The economic prosperity of the kingdom of Śarabhapura seems to have reached its zenith under king Prasannamātra who was in all probability the successor of Mahendrāditya. Unfortunately, the relation between Mahendrāditya and Prasannamātra is not known from any source. Not a single copper plate charter of Prasannamātra is yet discovered. In the absence of copper plate grants of Prasanna-

1 See Chapter Four of the present work ; NAHO, II (1978), pp. 26-30.

mātra his personality and achievements can be assessed only from the references made by Jayarāja and Sudevarāja I in their inscriptions.[1] The charters of Jayarāja and Sudevarāja I refer to Prasanna who is identical with Prasannamātra, as a monarch whose greatness is comparable with ocean. Prasannamātra followed the footprints of Mahendrāditya in issuing the gold coins.[2] It is striking to note that the coins of Prasannamātra which have been found in the Raipur and Bilaspur distrtcts of Madhya Pradesh are totally identical with that of Mahendrāditya except the legend which bears his name Śrī Prasannamātra. As many as one hundred and twelve gold coins of Prasannamātra discovered from the Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Maharashtra have been noticed by scholars.[3] Out of those coins eleven gold coins have been discovered from Nehna in Kalahandi district, by Yuvarāja J. P. Singh Deo[4], where inscriptions of Jayarāja and Sudevarāja I are also discovered. From the collections of Sri J. P. Singh Deo, four gold coins of Prasannamātra have been collected and preserved in the Sambalpur University Museum.[5] Prasannamātra followed the models of the coins of Mahendrāditya in his gold coins. His coins are found through out the length and breadth of Dakshiṇa Kośala which undoubtedly indicate that during his reign the kingdom of Śarabhapura touched Vidarbha and Utkala in the west and east respectively and that commercial activities developed greatly leading to the economic prosperity of his time in the kingdom of Śarabhapura. The availability of the gold coins of Prasannamātra in the coastal parts of Orissa[6] indicates that in all probability those coins were accepted by the kings of Kangoda and Utkala in the later half of the sixth century A.D.

We learn from the Mallar plates of Vyāghrarāja that Prasannapura was a prosperous city situated on the bank of the river Nidilā in the midst of forests[7] (Upavanarājirājita...Srotasvatyā Niḍilayā

1 Vide our present work, Chapter One and Four.
2 NAHO, II (1978), pp. 26-30 ff.
3 Prāchya Pratībhā (1977), I, p. 70.
4 See above (NAHO) I, (1978), pp. 26-30.
5 NAHO, (1978), II, pp. 26-30.
6 OHRJ, I, p. 137.
7 EI, XXXIV, pp. 49 ff.

pavitrikṛtāt). It seems that this Prasannapura was another hill-fort founded by Prasannamātra in some significant place of strategic importance surrounded by forests (Vanarājirājita). The hill-fort located on the bank of the river Nidilā has not yet been identified. However, the reference to Pūrvarāshṭra in the Mallar plates leads us to presume that Prasannapura was probably located in the region on the eastern side of Sheorinarayana. The establishment of a hill-fort in the name of Prasannamātra certainly indicates the greatness of the monarch as well as the expansion of the territory under Prasannamātra which necessitated the construction of the capital centering round a hill-fort. The reign of Prasannamātra was, indeed, one of the most prosperous periods in the history of the Śarabhapurīyas.

Jayarāja and His Times (C. 595 A.D.—C. 625 A.D.)

When Jayarāja succeeded to the throne in the beginning of the seventh century A.D. South Kośala had already reaped the benefits of a century of iron-rule of the Śarabhapurīyas. Towards the end of the sixth century Prasannamātra had brought about the political and economic stability of the kingdom of Śarabhapura which was reckoned as a force in the Central Indian politics of that time. With the accession of Jayarāja, son and successor of Prasannamātra, South Kośala was involved in the Indian politics of the seventh century A.D.

The seventh century of the Christian era witnessed the rise of three great personalities of Indian history. Harshavardhana, who succeeded to the throne in 606 A.D. emerged as the Lord of Northern India (Sakalottarapathanātha). Śasānka, wtih his capital at Karṇa-suvarṇa, made himself master of Eastern India in the first half of the seventh century A.D. Pulakeśin II, who succeeded to the throne in 610 A.D., exerted his political supremacy almost over the Southern India. In this political setting of India Jayarāja cautiously handled his political power and saved the country of South Kośala from the imperial designs of Harsha and Pulkeśin II. He was, indeed, one of the architects of the Śarabhapurīya ascendancy over South Kośala.

Jayarāja was the worthy successor of his illustrious father whose contribution to the expansion and consolidation of the kingdom of Śarabhapura was remarkable. He is known to us from his four copper plate grants which have been found at Amgura[1] in the Kalahandi district of Orissa, Arang[2] in the Raipur district and at Mallar[3] in the Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh. His Amgura plates of third regnal year refer to him as a devout worshipper of Viṣnu and the feet of his own parents (Paramabhāgavato mātā pitra pādānudhyāta).[4] But in his Mallar and Arang plates of fifth regnal year and Mallar plates of ninth regnal year he is described as one whose pair of feet was washed by the stream of lustre flowing from the crest jewels in the tiaras of the Sāmantas who were subjugated by his prowess (Vikkramopanata-Sāmanta-mukuṭa-chuḍāmaṇi-Prabhā prashekāmbu dhauta pādayugalo). The passage in the preamble of the charters issued after his fifth regnal year indicates that a large number of feudatory chiefs had submitted before the increasing imperial authority of Mahājayarāja. In his seals he described himself as one who overpowered his enemies by his prowess (Vikkramākrānta vidvishah).

The rising power of Kośala under Jayarāja seemed to have drawn the attention of Mahārāja Nāgabala of the Pāṇḍava family of Mekala. Consequently, there was a matrimonial alliance between the Śarabhapurīyas of Kośala and Pāḍuvaṃsīs of Mekala indicated by the Bahmani copper plates[5] of Bharatbala. Bharatbala refers to his queen Lokaprakāśā as a princess of Kośala, born of Amarajakūla. As we have discussed earlier Amarajakūla is identical with Amarāryakūla, which was the dynastic appelation of the Śarabhapurīyans according to the Malhar plates[6] of Vyāghrarāja. We further learn from the Burhikhar copper plate[7] grant that Surabala, son of Bharatbala and Lokaprakāśā richly endowed the temple of

1 JESI, IV, pp. 70-75.
2 CII, III, pp. 191-95.
3 EI, XXXIII, pp. 155-57 ; EI, XXXIV, pp. 28-31.
4 JESI, IV, pp. 70-71.
5 EI, XXVII, p. 141.
6 EI, XXXIV, p. 45-50.
7 SE, Vol. III (1976), pp. 183-93.

Jayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka of the village Sangama identified with Tala near Malhar in South Kośala. We are inclined to suggest that the temple of Jayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka was possibly built by Jayarāja to perpetuate the memory of his own name. In that case Surabala was interested to make endowments for the temple built by his maternal grandfather probably at the request of his mother Lokaprakāśā. In fact, at Sangama, identified with Tala, there are two Śiva temples which may be assigned to the sixth or seventh century of the Christian era, one of those temples appear to have been built by Jayarāja and named as the temple of Jayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka. In the light of these evidences we infer that Jayarāja brought about the marriage of his daughter Lokaprakāśā with Bharatbala, the ruler of the adjacent country of Mekala.

This dynastic marriage brought about the union of the two adjacent countries of Mekala and Kośala although apparently Mekala was a lesser alley. At a time when Harshavardhana and Pulakeśin II were marching from two different directions, to establish their supremacy over India, Jayarāja must have realised the gravity of the situation and planned to strengthen the political power of Kośala through a matrimonial alliance. The union of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs of Mekala and the Śarabhapuriyas or the Amarāryas of South Kośala seems to be a vital factor which served the integrity of both the territories from the imperial designs of Harsha and Pulkeśin II. Hiuen-Tsang[1] informs us, "the Great king Silāditya at this time was invading east and west and the countries from far and near giving allegiance to him, but no-la-cha refused to become subject to him". We further learn from the Chinese pilgrim that Harsha brought the five-Indias under allegiance.[2] The Five Indias' of Hiuen-Tsang seem to correspond to the five Gauḍas which flourished north of the Vindhyas. The five Gauḍas comprised Sārasvata, Kāvyakubja, Utkala, Mithilā and Gauḍa (Bengal). The chinese testimony indicates that Harsha's suzerainty was confined to the five territorial divisions of north-eastern India. Harsha's imperial designs were obviously thwarted in the eastern and western and central part of

1 Watters, II, pp. 239-336.

2 Ibid, Vol. I, p. 343.

India. Soon after the death of Śaśāṅka Harshavardhana was obviously marching in the eastern direction and we learn from the life of Hiuen-Tsang,[1] that he had occupied north Orissa by that time. Before he invaded Kangoda[2] Pulakeśīn II had already threatened the Southern gate of Kangoda by terrorising and subjugating the people of Kalinga. Mādhavarāja II, the ruler of Kangoda tactfully handled the situation and it seems that Kangoda continued to enjoy the position of a buffer State. While Mādhavarāja succeeded in maintaining the integrity of Kangoda in the midst of the great conflict between Harsha and Pulakeśīn. Jayarāja of the adjacent territory of Kośala could not have kept quiet. We learn from the Aihole cave inscription[3] that Pulkeśin II in course of his north-ward expansion subjugated the Kalingas alongwith the Kośalas. In the words of Ravikiru, the panegyrist of the Aihole Prasasti, through the excellencies of their house holders prominent in the pursuits of the three objects of life, and having broken the pride of the rulers of the earth, the Kalingas with the Kośalas by his army were made to evince signs of fear.[4] This inscriptional evidence indicates that Pulakeśin II succeeded in inflicting defeat on the early Gangas of Kalinga and the Śarabhapurīyas of South Kośala. It is probable that Jayarāja of South Kośala temporarily submitted before the Great Chālukyan monarch in course of the Harsha, Pulkeśin war which appears to have taken place at different spots in the east and Central and Western parts of India. R. D. Banerji[5] thinks that Pulakeśin II defeated Harsha in the eastern coast. It is quite probable that Pulakeśin II having crushed Piṣṭapura (vide Vrs. 27 of the Aihole cave inscription) proceeded to the north-eastern direction and subjugated the early Gaṇgas of Kalinga when Harsha-Vardhana having conquered Utkala or north Orissa proceeded as far as Kangoda which was possibly used by him as a military outpost.

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1 Harsha subjugated Kangoda in 642 A.D.

2 Ibid.

3 EL, VI, p. 1 ; I.A., VIII, pp. 242-245.

4 Grihiṇām Sva Svaguṇe Strivargatuṇgā । Vihitānya Kshitipāla Mānabhaṇgāh
Abh a-vannupajīta bhītiliṇgā । Yadanikena sakośalāh kaliṇgāh ॥
EI, VI, p. 1 ; I.A., VIII, pp. 242-45.

5 Pre-historic Ancient and Hindu India, p. 201.

Thus, apparently Harsha and Pulakeśin were face to face in a battle which was possibly fought somewhere at Koṇgoda, between Kaliṇga and Utkala on the eastern coast. We further learn from the Aihole[1] cave inscription that Pulakeśin II was present in the region of the Vindhyas and the Revā[2] where presumably he was engaged in a conflict with Harsha-Vardhana. In that case the united power of Kośala and Mekala under Jayarāja being submissive to Pulakeśin II seemed to have posed a potential danger before Harshavardhana who must have withdrawn from his further aggression beyond the Vindhyas. In the western part of India too Harsha's designs are known to have been thwarted by the Gurjara chief Dadda who protected Dhruvasena, lord of Vallabhi who was over powered by Harsha.[3] The Gurjara chief could afford to protect Dhruvasena because he was backed by Pulakeśin II. In our opinion in course of the protracted Harsha-Pulakeśin war Pulakeśin successfully checked Harsha by subjugating and befriending the countries like Kalinga, Kośala, Lāṭa and Gurjara. In course of the Harsha-Pulakeśin war on the Vindhyas Jayarāja, the rising monarch of the Śarabhapurīya line, obviously, submitted before Pulakeśin II and there by became enmical to Harshavardhana. Soon after the defeat of Pulakeśin II at the hands of the Pallava king Narasimhavarman at Pariyal, Maṇimangalam and Suramāla[4], Jayarāja presumably asserted his suzerainty and continued to rule independently. We learn from the life of Hiuen-Tsang written by Hui-li[5] that after the death of Pulakeśin II Harsha subjugated Kangoda in 642 A.D. In the same strain he might have launched a campaign against the Kośalan monarch who was at one time a feudatory of his rival in the South. We think, there is a veiled allusion to such a campaign of Harsha in his drama Ratnāvalī[6], although no conclusive proof can be adduced in support

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1 See above.

2 See Vrs. 24 of the Inscription ; Karambelkar, VW. Se., Sans. Ins. (1959), p. 26.

3 Vanasari platers, I.A., Vol. XIII, pp. 77-79.

4 SII, II, Part III, pp. 353-61 ; Ojha, G. S., Palaeography of India, 3rd Edition, 1959, p. 90.

5 Life, IV, p. 159.

6 Haridās, Sans. Granthamāla 232, Canto IV, pp. 169-73.

of this hypothesis. According to the theme of the play Vatsarāja Udayana sent an army against the king of Kośala. At the end of the war against Kośala Vijayavarmā is known to have brought forth the news of the discomfiture of the Kośalan monarch to the court of Udayana. In view of the fact that South Kośalan monarch was a subordinate chief of Harshas' rival, it seems that there is a veiled allusion to the declining power of South Kośala in the biased opinion of Harsha. It is not improbable that he, himself might have launched a campaign against South Kośala after the death of Pulakeśin II and might have temporarily subjugated the territory. In the absence of any epigraphic evidence in support of this hypothesis it is difficult to say whether Harsha actually subjugated Kośala or not. However, the veiled allusion in the Ratnāvalī seems to indicate that Harsha himself possibly subjugated Kośala for a short period.

Jayarāja was indeed, one of the greatest personalities in the royal house of Śarabhapura who steered the ship of the State in the most of the stormy invasions of Harsha and Pulakeśin and successfully maintained its territorial integrity. Even though he had to submit before Pulakeśīn II temporarily it was an act of political sagacity on his part to do so before the rising Chālukyan power. By bringing about the matrimonial alliance between the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs and the Śarabhapurīyas he contributed successfully to establish the ascendancy of Śarabhapura in the socio-political life of South Kośala. Like Mādhavarāja of Kangoda Jayarāja of the royal house of Śarabhapura occupied a significant place in the history of South Kośala.

Sudevarāja I (C. 625 A.D.—C. 650 A.D.)

The reign of Jayarāja marked the zenith of supremacy of the Śarabhapurīyas of South Kośala. In spite of the temporary set back caused by the Chālukyan aggression, Jayarāja seems to have played a significant role in upholding the integrity of the kingdom of Śarabhapura. The policy of matrimonial alliance adopted by Jayarāja had also contributed to the stability and strength of Śarabhpaura. The reign of his son and successor Sudevarāja I was only a period of peace and plenty, was not characterised by any external attack, nor was it eventful in the political history of South Kośala.

The only eventful crisis that possibly took place in the early years of his reign was a fratricidal war. We learn from the Mallar[1] and the Thakurdiya[2] plates that Pravararāja, the younger son of Jayarāja alias Mānamātra acquired his territory by his own power and prowess and established the capital of his territory at Śrīpura, identified with modern Sirpur[3] near Raipur. While all the known copper plate grants of Sudevarāja I were issued from Śarabhapura, those of his younger brother Pravararāja were issued from Śrīpura. We know from a study of the topographical features of the Śarabhapuriya charters that Śrīpura (Sirpur) was a part of the kingdom of Śarabhapura from the earliest period of their rule. Pravararājas' ascendancy at Śrīpura and the facts known from his seal that he conquered the kingdom by his arms (Svabhujopārjitakshite) indicate clearly that there was a fratricidal war between Sudevarāja I and Pravararāja which resulted in the division of the empire. Sudevarāja I continued to rule from the old capital of Śarabhapura while Pravararāja of the younger line ruled from his capital at Śrīpura.

Sudevarāja I is known to us from his Khariar plates[4] of 7th regnal years, the Arang plates[5] of 8th regnal year, the incomplete Sarangarh plates[6] and the damaged Sirpur grant[7]. In addition to these charters the Pokhara copper plate[8] grant is also sometimes attributed to Sudevarāja I although there is no positive proof for this attribution. The grant contains neither the name of the donor nor the place of issue. The charter only comprises the second plate, while the first and the third plates are missing. We can only say from the tone and text of the charter that it was, undoubtedly, a Śarabhapuriyan record.

A close study of the charters of Sudevarāja indicates that his chief queen Rājyamahādevi played an important role in the administration

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1 EI, XXXIV, p. 52, JIH, XXXVII, p. 265.
2 EI, XXII, p. 22.
3 EI, XXIII, p. 119.
4 EI, IX, p. 172.
5 EI, XXXI, p. 103.
6 EI, XXXI, p. 20.
7 CII, III, p. 190.
8 EI, IX, p. 283.

of the country and exerted considerable influence over Sudevarāja. She is referred to in the Sirpur plates of the 7th regnal year (vide line 11 of the plates as Mahādevī)[1] and the incomplete Sarangarh plates as Rājyamahādevī. There is no other mention of any queen in the charters of the Śarabhapurīyas except in the Sirpur and Sarangarh plates of Sudevarāja I. It is further interesting to note that the same Sirpur plates which refer to the chief queen of Mahāsudevarāja indicate that the grant was made by one venerable Nanna. We propose to identify Nanna of the Sirpur plates with Nannadeva, son of Indrabala of the Pāṇḍuvaṃsī lineage, mentioned in the Bonda,[2] Rajim[3] and Baloda[4] plates of Tivaradeva. We know that the Pāṇḍava family of Mekala and the Amarārya family of Śarabhapura were united by a matrimonial bond during the reigns of Bharatbala and Jayarāja. It is further known to us from the Burhikhar charter[5] that Surabala, son of Bharatbala made donations in South Kośala. Thus, we may presume that in this way gradually the Pāṇḍuvaṃsīs of Mekala came in contact with the Śarabhapurīyas or Amarāryas of Kośala and occupied important positions in the administrative structure of the State. It seems very probable that Nannadeva, father of Tivaradeva who was the obtainer of entire Kośala, was respected as the Mahāsāmanta in the court of Sudevarāja I. Rājyamahādevī mentioned in the Sirpur and Sarangarh plates also appears to be a princess of the Pāṇḍava family of Mekala and it is likely that she was related to Nannadeva whose land grant has been confirmed by Sudevarāja as desired by his chief queen.

In our opinion Sudevarāja I was the last king of the main line of the royal house of Śarabhapura. It seems that after the death of Sudevarāja I the venerable Nanna, identical with Nannadeva of Pāṇḍava family of Mekala seized the political power of Śarabhapura while his father Indrabala occupied a prominent position at Śrīpura

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1 EI, XXXI, p. 103.
2 CII, III, p. 291-94, EI, XXII, pp. 15-23, EI, VII, p. 104.
3 CII, III, p. 294.
4 See above.
5 JESI, IV, pp. 183-93.

for a long period. We have discovered a clay seal[1] bearing the legend Nannadeva in the box-head character, from the Maraguda valley, the capital of Śarabhapura. Palaeographically the seal may be assigned to the seventh century of the Christian era. The discovery of the seal in the ancient site of the capital of Śarabhapura clearly indicates Nannadeva's suzerainty over Śarabhapura, presumably after the death of Sudevarāja I.

Sudevarāja I was a great champion of Vaishnavism and he is known from his inscription to have patronised the brahminical form of Hinduism. He is also known to have devoted his time for the welfare of the people of his country side. Line 25 of the Raipur copper plate grant reveals that he had excavated a well called Śrīvāppika[2] for the purpose of irrigation in the village Śrīsahika, identified with Sirsahi[3] in the Baloda Bazar Tahsil. This single evidence indicates that like Śrīvāppika there were probably many such water tanks for the irrigation of the cultivate lands.

The reign of Sudevarāja I was indeed peaceful and prosperous. The Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen-Tsang[4] is known to have visited South Kośala in 639 A.D. after his visit of Kalinga. From the capital of Kalinga the pilgrim travelled in the North Western direction through forests and mountains about 1800 li and then reached the country Kośala. The Chinese traveller has given a vivid account of the prosperous condition ot Kośala of the time of Sudevarāja. He does not mention the name of Sudevarāja although he says that the king of South Kośala was of the Kshatriya race. Very strangely he refers to a king called Sādvah as the builder of the great Sangharām of Nāgārjuna.[5] It appears as if the pilgrim confused Sudevarāja I as Sadvarāja was the builder of the great Sangharāma. He refers to the peaceful co-existanee of the Buddhists and the Brāhminical Hindus side by

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1 Fig. I. It was discovered by Jitamitra Prasad Sing Deo, the yuvarāja of Khariar in 1972 and is at present preserved in the Sambalpur University Museum.

2 CII, III, pp. 196-97.

3 EI, IX, p. 283.

4 HT, Watters, p. 201.

5 Beal, S., Travels of Hiouen-Tshang (1958), Sushil Gupta (India) Pvt. Ltd., p. 414 ff.

side. He found that the population was very dense and the people were brave and impetuous. According to him Kośala was about 5000 li in circuit and its frontiers consisted of encircling mountain crags. He noticed forests together in succession in the length and breadth of the country. He observed that the capital was about 40 li round and the soil was rich and fertile, yielding abundant crops. We further learn from the account of the pilgrim that Polomolokieli which is identified with Parimalagiri, modern Narasimhanath, was a great centre of Buddhism even as late as the second quarter of the seventh century A.D.

The royal house of Śarabhapura which rose to eminence under Prasannamātra and Mānamātra and exerted preponderant influence over South Kośala for more than a century lost its hold over the territory in the middle of the seventh century A.D. under Sudevarāja I. Nannadeva succeeded in securing for the Pāṇḍuvaṃsīs a stronghold in South Kośala and ultimately established suzerainty over the same while his father Indrabala tightened his grip over the collateral branch which ruled over Śrīpura.

Chapter Eight

DECLINE OF THE ŚARABHAPURĪYAS

The political power of the Śarabhapurīyas began to decline from the days of Sudevarāja I. In spite of the prevailing plenty and prosperity of the kingdom the seed of disruption had already been sown. The fratricidal war that possibly took place between Sudevarāja I and Pravararāja, obviously, led to the division of the territory. The kingdom carved out by Mahārāja Narendra and expanded and consolidated by Prasannamātra and Mānamātra covering almost the whole of South Kośala, was now disintegrated by fratricidal rivalry.

The Mallar[1] and Thakardiya[2] plates reveal that Pravararāja, son of Mānamātra, ruled over a portion of the Śarabhapurīya territory with his capital at Śrīpura. Pravararāja was, obviously, the younger brother of Sudevarāja I and the fratricidal struggle between the two led to the establishment of the younger line of the Śarabhapurīyas. As we have pointed out earlier Sudevarāja I was the last king of the main line of the Śarabhapurīyas. It seems that Pravararāja was the founder of the collateral junior line of the Śarabhapurīyas who ruled from his capital at Śrīpura. He is known to have two land grants in his 3rd regnal year in the Tuḍarāshṭra and Śaṅkhachakra bhoga both located in the modern Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh. He is identical with Pravarabhaṭṭāraka who is mentioned in the Mallar plate[3] of Vyāghrarāja as the son of Jayabhaṭṭāraka. It is reasonable to identify Jayarāja alias Mānamātra and his son Pravarabhaṭṭāraka with Pravararāja, son of Mānamātra, the Mallar plates further reveal that during the reign of Pravararāja his brother (anuja) Vyāghrarāja who ruled over Pūrvarāshṭra as its Governor issued a land grant from the city of Prasannapura which was in all probability founded by Prasannamātra on the bank of the river Nidilā. Pravararāja possibly ruled for about twenty years and he was

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1 EI, XXXIV, p. 52 ff; JIH, XXXVII, p. 265 ff.
2 Ibid, XXII, p. 22 ff.
3 EI, XXXIV, pp. 45-50.

succeeded by Durgarāja, known to us from the Kauvatal[1] and the Mahasamund grants.[2] The relation between Pravararāja and Durgarāja is not known but it is well known from the above mentioned chapters that Durgarājas' son and successor ruled from his capital at Śrīpura. It is further known to us that the engraver of the Mallar and Thakurdiya plates of Pravararāja namely Golasimha continued to hold that office under Sudevarāja II as known from the Kauvatal and the Mahasamund plates. Thus, we are inclined to believe that Sudevarāja II and his father Durgarāja belonged to the junior line of the Śarabhapurīya family which ruled from Śrīpura. Although the relation between Durgarāja and Pravararāja is not known it is possible that Durgarāja was the son and successor of Pravararāja. So far we do not have any copper plate grant of Durgarāja, possibly he ruled for a short period of about a decade. Durgarāja was succeeded by his son Sudevārāja II who was the last known king of the Śarabhapurīya family. As we have discussed earlier in Chapter V of the present work Sudevarāja, the donor of the Kuvatal and the Mahasamund plates, is Sudevarāja II who ruled for about twenty years from C. 665 A.D. to C. 685 A.D. This was a critical period in the history of the Śarabhapurīyas when the scions of the Pāṇḍava family of Mekala entered the court of the Śarabhapurīyas as their subordinate and gradually exerted preponderant influence upon them. We learn from the Mahasamund plates that by the third regnal year of Sudevarāja II, one Indrarāja assumed the high office of *Sarvādhikārādhikṛta Śrī Mahāsāmanta*. The same person is described in the Kauvatal plates of the seventh regnal year of Sudevarāja II as Indrabalarāja who was the *Mahāsāmanta, Sarvādhikārādhikṛta* and *Dūtaka*. There is no doubt that Indrabalarāja the Kauvatal plates is identical with Indrarāja of the Mahasamund plates and that he is also identical with Indrabala, father of Nannadeva and grandfather of Tivaradeva. We learn from the inscriptions of Tivaradeva, the obtainer of Kośala, that Indrabala, son of Udayana belonged to the Pāṇḍuvaṃśī line of South Kośala. Dr. V. V.

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1 EI, XXXI, pp. 314-16.
2 JESI, V, pp. 90-95.

Mirashi[1] is of opinion that Indrabala was the grandson of Bharatabala known to us from the Bahamani plates. He thinks that Udayana was the son of Bharatabala.[2] In accordance with this hypothetical consideration the line of Udayana was a collateral branch of the Pāṇḍava family of Mekala which in the time of Surabala is known to have penetrated into South Kośala, as we learn from the Burhikhar copper plate grant.[3] It may also be surmised that Udayana was probably identical with Surabala who was succeeded by his son Indrabala. In any case it is apparent that the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs from the time of Surabala extended their influence over South Kośala and in the next generation Indrabala exerted considerable influence over Sudevarāja II. Indrabala is known to us not only from the charters of Sudevarāja II but also from the mutilated stone inscription of Kharod[4] which eulogises him as one whose lotus-like feet looked resplendant with the vows of the crest jewels of all kings. This eulogy indicates that he was a powerful conqueror whose services were found indispensable in the court of Sudevarāja II. It seems that Indrabala had conquered a portion of South Kośala at a time when the royal house of Śarabhapura was in the declining stage, and possibly deputed his son Nannadeva[5] to the court of Sudevarāja I where he was honoured as a venerable courtier. Nannadeva is identical with Nannarāja who is described in the Nagpur Museum stone inscriptions[6] (also called Bhandak stone Inscription) as the conqueror of the earth. Thus, these inscriptional evidences clearly indicate that Indrabala and his son Nannarāja of the Pāṇḍava family had conquered a portion of South Kośala and consequently received due recognition in the courts of Sudevarāja I and Sudevarāja II. While Indrabala exercised his stronghold over the junior line of the Śarabhapurīyas at Śrīpura,

1 EI, XXXII, p. 15 ff.

2 Mirashi, V. V., Studies in Indology, I, pp. 218-19.

3 SE (1976), IV, pp. 183-93.

4 IHQ, XIX, p. 139 ff.

5 The Sirpur plates of Sudevarāja I refers to one Nanna who seems to have been a respectable courtier in the Śarabhapura Court (EI, XXXI, p. 103 ff).

6 Vide Vrs. 40 of the Bhandak Stone inscription, Rajguru, S. N., IO, IV, p. 292; JBBRS, I, p. 148.

his son Nanna was respected as an influential courtier under Sudevarāja I at Śarabhapura. It seems to be a wonderful stategy of both the father and the son which weakened both the Senior and Junior line of the Śarabhapurīya family. Indrabala assumed the high office of the Chief Minister endowed with all powers and privileges (Sarvādhikārādhikṛta) and subsequently, he also combined in himself the office of both the Chief Minister and the Dūtaka. Evidently, after the death of Sudevarāja II Indrabala of the Pāṇḍava family seized the political power and inaugurated the rule of the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs over South Kośala. In all his inscriptions Tivaradeva, the obtainer of entire Kośala, refers to Indrabala as his grandfather who was really responsible for the foundation of the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs rule over South Kośala. Before Indrabala snatched the political power of the junior line of the Śarabhapurīyas at the ripe old age his son Nanna presumably under the direction of Indrabala had succeeded in capturing the throne of Śarabhapura. This is proved by the discovery of the clay seal of Nanna in the Maraguda valley near Khariar in the Kalahandi district of Orissa. The seal, undoubtedly, reveals that Nannadeva, son of Indrabala, seized the throne of Śarabhapura either after the death of Sudevarāja I or during his life time. Nannadeva was succeeded by his son, Tivaradeva who, thus, obtained the territory of both the elder line and the junior line of the royal house of Śarabhapura and declared himself as the obtainer of entire Kośala (Prāpta Sakala Kośalādhipatyah).[1] Thus, the Pāṇḍuvaṃśī King Tivaradeva inherited the entire territory of South Kośala from his father Nannarāja who in alliance with his father Indrabalarāja had succeeded in seizing the throne of Śarabhapura in the last quarter of the seventh century A.D. Thus, collapsed the kingdom of Śarabhapura which had emerged in the fag end of the fifth century A.D. as a new territory in the pages of history. The territory of Śarabhapura with its humble beginning in the Maraguda Valley expanded in the northern and western directions for a century and a half and met its doom in the last quarter of the seventh century A.D.

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1 CII, III, pp. 291-94 ; EI, XXXIV, p. 111 ff ; EI, VII, p. 104.

A close study of the aforesaid account reveals that the neighbouring country of Mekala was responsbile for the decline and the fall of Śarabhapura. According to the Maṇḍala theory of Kautilya, "A neighbouring foe of considerable power is styled an enemy ; and when he is involved in calamities or has taken himself to evil ways, he becomes assailable ; and when he has little or no help becomes destructible ; otherwise (i.e. when he is provided with some help), he deserves to be harassed or reduced, such are the aspects of an enemy".[1]

The Śarabhapurīyas by entering into a matrimonial alliance with the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs of Mekala intended to strengthen their kingdom to resist the aggression of Harsha and Pulakeśin II but by taking resort to this policy of dynastic marriage they committed the blunder by maintaining friendsh ip with a neighbouring territory which in the long run was always expected to overpower the adjacent country. The history of the Śarabhapurīyas of South Kośala and that of the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs of Mekala reveals the veracity of Kautilyas' warning. The Śarabhapurīyas had adopted the policy of dynastic marriage in violation of the Maṇḍala theory of Kautilya. Thus in course of time the scions of the Pāṇḍava family of Mekala found their access into the territory of Kośala. Surabala took advantage of this relation and pushed as far as the heart of Bilaspur. In the next generation Indrabala conquered a portion of South Kośala and occupied the position of Chief Minister under Sudevarāja II. His son Nanna entered into the court of Sudevarāja I and ultimately seized the throne of Śarabhapura. Thus, violation of Kautilyas' Maṇḍala theory and wrong application of the policy of dynastic marriage resulted in the rise of the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs at the expense of the Śarabhapurīyas of Kośala.

Another important factor which had contributed to the disintegration of the kingdom of Śarabhapura was the fratricidal conflict between Sudevarāja I and Pravararāja. The inscriptional sources indicate that there was a fratricidal war resulting in the division of the kingdom. The scions of the Pāṇḍava family entered into the divided kingdom with ulterior motive and brought about its fall by the policy of 'Divide and Rule'.

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1 Samasastri, R., (Ed) K.A. (1956), p. 290.

Chapter Nine

ŚARABHAPURĪYAN POLITY

The copper plate grants[1] of the Śarabhapurīya kings are our chief sources of information for a study of the polity adopted by them in the sixth and seventh century of the Christian era. In addition to their copper plate grants their gold[2] coins[3] also indicate the prosperity of their kingdom and imperial sway-over South Kośala. Original texts on Hindu polity like Kautilyas' Arthashāstra, manuscript and Yājnavalkya smriti are important literary sources which help us to throw light on the administration of South Kośala in the light of the Śarabhapurīyan records.

The Gupta polity which was essentially based on the system propounded by Kautilya and further substantiated by Kāmaṇḍaka seems to have influenced the central structure of the Śarabhapurīyan kingdom in the sixth century A.D. Samudraguptas' conquest of South Kośala had opened the channel through which the concept of Gupta polity began to flow to South Kośala. The strong influence of the Vākātakas and the Guptas over the Śarabhapurīyan kingdom is indicated by the gold coins of Kramāditya found in the Khairtal hoard,[4] claim of the lordship of Narendrasena[5] over Kośala as mentioned in the Balaghat plates of Prithivīsena and the reverential reference to Paramabhaṭṭārakapāda by Mahārāja Narendra in his Kurud plates.[6] There is, no doubt, that Paramabhaṭṭārakapāda of the Kurud plates refers to the overlordship of the Gupta, however, nominal it might be. The use of the Gupta era by Mahārāja Bhīmasena II in his Arang copper plate grant[7] is also another important evidence indicating Gupta influence over South Kośala. It is also

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1 Vide Chapter One of the present work.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Vide Chapter One.
5 EI, IX, pp. 267-71.
6 Ibid, XXXI, pp. 263-68.
7 EI, IX, p. 344 ff.

striking to note that in the contiguous territory of Kalinga in the middle of the sixth century A.D. Dharmarāja I under the overlordship of Prithivī vigraha used the Gupta Era 250 in his Sumandala copper plate[1] grant.

Kingship

Although no Śarabhapurīya monarch compares himself with divine being, their claim of origin from Śarabha "a fabulous animal with eight legs"[2], indicates their imposition about their miraculous origin. This hallow of mystified origin contributed to the super-human nature of kingship in the Śarabhapurīya polity. As we have discussed earlier in Chapter IV of our present work in its bare nakedness the origin of the Śarabhapurīyas was tribal and the hinduised social promotion under the influence of Brahminism the dynasty founded by a tribal chief assumed the new name of Amarāryakūla. The Śarabhapurīyas like the Imperial Guptas were great upholders of the Brahmanical form of Hinduism and embraced Vaishnavism as their personal faith. They accepted Manu and Yājnavalkya as the authorities and the sanctions given by these law givers were the guide lines for the Śarabhapurīyas in their administration. In all their copper plate grants they cited relevant imprecatory verses from Dharmaśāstras and strictly followed them in the affairs of administration. In the Śarabhapurīyan polity the king in theory was at the apex of the administrative structure and was the fountain of law and justice. Among the Śarabhapurīyan monarchs Narendra enjoyed the title Mahārāja ; Jayarāja and Pravararāja suffixed the title Bhaṭṭāraka to their names and almost all the kings of the dynasty prefixed the epithet Mahā (great) to their names. They did not enjoy the high sounding titles like Paramabhaṭṭāraka or Mahārājādhirāja or Parameśvara. But in their copper plate grants they claimed that their two feet were washed by the water which was flowing from the lustre of the crest jewels in the tiaras of the sāmantas who were subjugated by their prowess (Vikkramopanata sāmanta mukuṭa çuḍāmaṇi prabhā prasekāmbu dhauta pādayugalo).

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1 EI, XXVIII, p. 84 ff.

2 Vide Chapter Four of the present work.

This phraseology indicates that they enjoyed the status of overlord although they did not claim the title of the sovereign of kings. The glory and greatness of the monarch depended upon his victory over the neighbouring enemies. They claimed in their inscriptions that they were responsible for the removal of the parting of the hair or the widowhood of their enemies (ṛpu vilāsinī sīmantoddharaṇahetuh).

Succession to the throne was determined by the law of primogeniture. We learn from the Śarabhapurīyan charters that this law was generally followed except in the reign of Sudevarāja I. At the death of Jayarāja there was a dispute for the succession to the throne which obviously led to a fratricidal war. Pravararāja alias Pravarabhaṭṭāraka,[1] the younger brother of Sudevarāja I, was a claimant for the throne of Śarabhapura in violation of the law of primogeniture. The fratricidal struggle led to the division of the empire and this division ultimately led to its fall.

Queens are not frequently mentioned in the Śarabhapurīyan charters, although occasionally they made land grants in favour of learned brāhmaṇas. We learn from the Sarangarh plates of Sudevarāja I that Rājyamahādevī, the chief queen, donated the village Chullāndaraka to a group of brāhmaṇas.[2] However, the grant was confirmed by the king himself according to the charter. Sometimes the princes of the royal blood were in charge of different divisions of the kingdom. They were also free to make landgrants without royal assent. We learn from the Mallar plates that Vyāghrarāja, the younger brother of Pravarabhaṭṭāraka, who was the Governor of Pūrvarāshṭra with his headquarters at Prasannapura, donating the village Kunturapadraka to Dikshita Agnichandrasvāmī.[3]

Nobility was the prop of the monarchy in the Śarabhapurīyan state. The monarch was supported by a group of Sāmantas who enjoyed semi-independent status in the State. Indrabalarāja was a mahāsāmanta who is mentioned in the Kauvatal[4] and the Mahasamund[5] plates of Sudevarāja II. He is also known to us as a great

1 EI, XXXIV, pp. 45-50.
2 EI, IX, pp. 281-84.
3 EI, XXXIV, pp. 45-50.
4 Ibid, XXXI, pp. 314-16.
5 JESI, V, pp. 93-97.

conqueror from the Bhandak inscription.[1] There was a class of land owning aristocracy which seemed to have been very influential in the society and the Government. Quite a good number of land grants, later on confirmed by the kings, were made by them in favour of learned brāhmaṇas. Rāhudeva was one such powerful aristocrate who enjoyed the status of 'bhoga-pati' and donated the village Śarkarāpadraka situated in the Nandapurabhoga, to brāhmaṇa svāmīppa of vājasaneyacharaṇa of Attreya-gotra. This is known to us from the Pipardula copper plate grant issued in the third regnal year of Mahārāja Narendra. It is probable that Rāhudeva was a bhogapati or the bhuktipati of Nandapura-bhoga and in that capacity he could donate the rent free village with the prior permission of the king. Haḍappagraha Vatsa was another eminent personage who was probably of the rank of amātya, donated the village Mokkepika situated in the Nagarottarapatha to several brāhmaṇas.[2] Dr. D. C. Sircar[3] thinks that Haḍappagraha was identical with haḍappagrahamātya as mentioned in the Kamkollu plates of the Salankāyana king Nandivarman I. According to Śukrāchārya an amātya is he who has knowledge of lands and records.[4] It is interesting to note that in the Barang plates[5] of Umāvarman of Kalinga, the writer of the record was Amātya kumāra. As per this analogy it is probable that Vatsa, the donor of the Mallar plates, was a resourceful scion of the royal-blood. Another notable aristocrate in the Śarabhapurīyan court was the venerable Nanna who donated lands to Kausipasvāmī of Taittiriya śākhā of Parāsara-gotra according to the Sirpur plates[6] of the seventh regnal year of Sudevarāja I. We have identified the venerable Nanna of the aforesaid plates with Nannarāja of the Kharod inscription.[7] We have also noticed a clay seal of Nanna in the Maraguda valley which was the site of the capital of Śarabhapura. It is Nannadeva who is no other than the son of

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1 JRAS (1905), pp. 617 ff.
2 EI, XXXIV, pp. 28-29.
3 Ibid.
4 OSRJ, VI, No. 2, p. 106.
5 Ibid.
6 EI, XXXI, pp. 103-7.
7 IHQ, XIX, p. 139 ff.

Indrabala of the Pāṇḍava family of Mekala and Kośala. Bhogilla was another powerful aristocrate who having enjoyed the confidence of the monarch occupied the office of Pratihāra and granted the village Śivalingika to a group of brāhmaṇas in the eighth regnal year of Sudevarāja I.[1] Brāhmaṇa Sāvitrī Svāmīn of Kauṇḍinya Gotra with the permission of the monarch donated the village Śrīsahika in the Pūrvarāshṭra to his two sons-in-law, Nāgavatsasvāmī and Bandhuvatsasvāmī in the tenth regnal year of Sudevarāja I.[2] We learn from the Pokhra copper plate grant[3] that one Daṇḍa chakra made a land grant with the prior permission of the monarch. Thus, it is evident that several resourceful sāmantas forming a powerful class of nobility supported the monarch and received due recognition in the Śarabhapurīyan State.

Military system

The kingdom of Śarabhapura with its powerful military personnel flourished with full glory during the iron rule of its rulers. Under Mahārāja Narendra it expanded in the northern direction probably at the expense of the Mahārāja Bhīmasena I of the Rājarshitūlyakūla. We know from the Kurud copper plate grant that he issued a charter from the victorious military camp (Vijayaskandhāvāra).[4] In the Śarabhapurīyan state the king was the supreme commander of the military forces and he personally led the army in the battle field. This is indicated by a veiled allusion given by Harsha in his drama 'Ratnāvalī'. It is described in the said work that the king of Kośala mounted a maddened elephant while fighting in the Vindhyan valley against the general of Vatsa.[5] In course of the most critical period of the Harsha-Pulakeśīn war probably fought at the Reva of the Vindhyan valley Jayarāja must have employed a powerful elephantry to safeguard the integrity of Kośala.

In addition to elephantry, cavalry and infantry must have been employed as military forces of the state. In the Śarabhapurīyan

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1 CII, III, p. 190 ff.
2 Ibid, pp. 196-97.
3 IHQ, XXX, pp. 84-85.
4 EI, XXXI, pp. 263-68.
5 Ratnāvalī, Haridas Granthāmalā series, Canto IV ,p. 110.

charters we come across the terms 'Chāṭas' and 'bhaṭas' which are very often translated as regular and irregular soldiers.[1] Pandit Bhagavanlal Indraji thinks that the expression 'Chāṭa-bhaṭa' means bhaṭas against chāṭas, i.e. soldiers against robbers.[2] Buhler[3] and Fleet[4] think that Chāṭas and bhaṭas were regular and irregular troops. Bāṇa says in Harsha charita that the Chāṭas and the bhaṭas were hated by the country people on account of their cruelty.[5] Vogel[6] thinks that Chāṭa corresponds to Char which means to head of a Parganā bhaṭa was an officer. D. C. Sircar[7] suggests that Chāṭa might be the leader of the group of bhaṭas. V. V. Mirashi is of opinion that the Chāṭas and bhaṭas were some what analogous to modern police men and soldiers responsible for the peace and order of the kingdom.[8] Monnier Williams raises the doubt whether Chāṭa should properly be a chara (a spy or not).[9] Yājnavalkya[10] places Chāṭa alongwith thieves etc. as men who are likely to be injurious to the public. Sudraka in Mrichchhakaṭika writes : even dogs would not go to a place where chāṭas, artisans etc. reside.[11] In the Śarabhapurīyan charters chāṭas and bhaṭas are disallowed to exercise any unlawful encroachment over the lands granted to the learned Brāhmaṇas.[12] In the Śailodbhava charters the term bhaṭa is definitely used to mean soldier.[13] In the light of the aforesaid discussion there is no doubt that the Bhaṭas were the regular soldiers of the infantry while the Chāṭas were irregular soldiers recruited temporarily in times of war.

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1 IA, VII, p. 250 and notes.
2 IA, VI, p. 71.
3 IA, VII, p. 250 and notes.
4 CII, III, p. 291 ff ; EI, XII, p. 157.
5 Bāṇa, Harshacharita, VII.
6 Antiquities of Chamba State, pp. 130-32.
7 Sircar, D. C., IE, p. 393 ff.
8 Journal of Nagpur University (1937), No. 3, p. 25.
9 Loc.cit.
10 Yājnavalkya I.I., 336.
11 Mrichchhakaṭika, Bombay Sanskrit Series, I, p. 223.
12 Vide Charters of the Śarabhapurīyas, Chapter One.
13 Loc.cit.

CIVIL ADMINISTRATION

Divisions

The Śarabhapurīya state which covered almost the whole of South Kośala was more or less equivalent to a deśa of the Gupta empire. It is probable that at one time Kośala was a part of the Gupta empire in the pre-Śarabhapurīyan period when the Nalas were ousted from the political scene. Under the Śarabhapurıyas their territory was a sovereign state free from any foreign control. It was more or less a maṇḍala as we learn from the Adabhara plates[1] of Nannarāja. The Kingdom of Śarabhapura corresponding to South Kośala was about 5000 li (Approximately 800 miles) in circuit. According to Dharmaśāstra[2] a maṇḍala comprised 20 Yajanas (160 miles) in every direction. In that case accordingly a maṇḍala should comprise about 640 miles in circuit. Thus, the report of Hiuen-Tsang and the verdict of Dharmaśāstras approximately agree in indicating the area of South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas. The kingdom of Śarabhapura as we learn from the Śarabhapurīya charters was divided into several 'bhuktis' or 'bhogas'. Chullādasimā-bhoga, Nandapura bhoga, Manṭarāja-bhukti, Samparājya bhukti, Tosaḍḍa bhukti, Tundaraka-bhukti, Hākirī bhoga or Dākirībhoga, Kshitimandahārabhoga and Śaṅkhachakra-bhoga-vishaya are the well known divisions of the Śarabhapurīyan State.[3] In the line 24 of the Allahabad Pillar inscription we come in contact with the term bhukti consisting of several districts, for example Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti included the districts of Bogra, Dinajpur and Rajsahi. The largest territorial divisions of the Pala and Sena kingdoms was bhukti. Similarly in the Śarabhapurıya state bhukti was the largest division. But it seems that bhukti and vishaya were more or less identical in the kingdom of Śarabhapura. Thus, we find mention of Śaṅkha Chakra Bhogavishaya which indicates that bhoga-bhukti and Vishaya were identical. The Māṭharas of Kalinga also had such a system of division and they divided their country into several

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1 Sakala kosalotkala maṇḍalādhipatya, Vide line 6 of the plates, EI, XXXI, p. 221.

2 Vasu, N. N., Viśvakoṣa, Vol. XXI, p. 934 ; IA (1907), XXXVI, p. 350.

3 Vide Chapter Two of the present work.

bhogas like Mahendra bhoga vishaya and Bhilinga bhogavishaya. In Kangoda under the Śailodbhavas also bhukti and bhukti-vishaya were more or less identical. In Parikud plates[1] of Madhyamarāja we come across a territorial division known as Kaṭaka-bhukti-vishaya. Thus, we are inclined to believe that bhoga and bhukti of the Śarabhapurīya charters are synonymous divisions of the State. In the Śarabhapurīyan charters we find the mention of only one district called Antaranālaka,[2] which is specifically referred to as a vishaya. In seems that several bhuktis or vishayas were included in specific divisions of the kingdoms which were called Rāshṭra or Patha. Thus, we find the mention of the village Mokkepika in Nagarottarapatha[3] and the mention of the villages namely Pamvā, Śrīsahika and Kuntura Padraka in the Pūrvarāshṭra.[4] We think that Pūrvarāshṭra corresponded to the eastern division of the empire. Similarly, other divisions of the empire must have existed in the Śarbhapurīyan State although they are not found in the available charters. However, it is striking to note that we find reference to such division as Uttararāshṭra[5] in the Bahmani plates of Bharatbala and also Paschima Lankā[6] in the Sonepur plates of Kumāra Somesvaradeva. Thus we find that it was traditional to divide the State into divisions corresponding probably to the revenue divisions of the modern times. The Rāshṭras and Pathas in the Śarabhapurīyan State were probably identical.

The bhuktis or vishayas were divided into several grāmas or janapadas. However, in addition to Janapadas or Grāmas there were Puras or Towns were probably under the administrations of the Purapālas. In the Śarabhapurīya charters we find the mention of Śarabhapura which was the capital city, Śrīpura and Prasannapura which were the headquarters of the kingdom in different periods. It seems that there were also many more towns which are indicated

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1 EI, IX, pp. 281-87.
2 EI, XXXIII, pp. 155-56.
3 Ibid, XXXIV, pp. 28-29.
4 Vide Chapter Two of the present work.
5 EI, XXVII, pp. 132-45.
6 Ibid, XII, pp. 237-42 also XXVIII, pp. 321-26.

by Hiuen-Tsang. The Pilgrim records that in the kingdom of South Kośala, the town and villages were close together.[1] The lowest unit of the Śarabhapurīya kingdom concerning administrative division was Grāma. We find the names of the following grāmas in their charters as Keśavaka, Ārāmaka, Sarkarāpadraka, Rājya-grāma, Mokkepika, Pamvā, Navannaka, Sāmbilaka, Śrisāhika, Śivalingika, Chullāndaraka, Aṣāḍaka, Mitragrāma, Kunturapadraka, Sunikagrāma and Khalapadraka.[2]

Organised Bureaucracy

Although the kingdom of Śarabhapura has not been technicaliy designated in the copper plate grants there is no doubt that it was a deśa or a maṇḍala in the technical sense of the term. According to Kāmaṇḍaka nītisāra the lord of the Maṇḍala should rule over his territory equipped with Koṣa, Daṇḍa, Durga, Amātya and Mantrī (Samātyasahamantribhih).[3] The Śarabhapurīyas followed the Gupta pattern of administration which was based on the system suggested by Kautilya. Kautilya[4] writes in his Arthashāstra, "sovereignty is possible only with assistance, for a single wheel can never move". He is of opinion that in accordance with this analogy a monarch cannot carry on the administration without the assistance of an organised bureaucracy. We have noted earlier that the king was at the apex of the administrative structure and that he was supported by a group of Mahāsāmantas who received due recognition from the monarch. Thus, there was really a feudal structure in the government of Śarabhapura. But the real administration was in charge of the secretariat which managed the affairs of the State. Below the rank of the Mahāsāmanta there were a large number of officers headed by the Amātyas. In our opinion Amātya was a rank equivalent to the cadre of I.A.S. of the modern times. Officers of this rank were posted in charge of different

1 Beal, S., Travels of Hiouen-Thsiang, p. 415.
2 Vide Chapter Two of the present work.
3 Vasu, N. N., Visvakosha (Bengali), XIII, p. 934.
"Upetah Kosadandābhyām Samātyasaha mantrībhīh ।
Durgatathā chintayet Sādhuh Maṇḍalam Maṇḍalādhipah ॥
4 Samashastry, R., K. A. (1915 Bangalore) 14.

office and were designated accordingly, the Chief among the Amātyas seems to have been designated by the Śarabhapurīyas was Sarvādhikārādhikṛta. He seems to be the Chief Minister who enjoyed all the powers and privileges of the Government next to the monarch. Indrabala of the Pāṇḍava family was a great conqueror and a resourceful mahāsāmantas, who occupied this important position under Sudevarāja II. Venerable Nanna seems to have occupied a similar position in the court of Sudevarāja I although his designation has not been mentioned in the Sirpur plates. The discovery of the seal of Nannadeva in the maraguda valley leads us to believe that he was no less than his father in rank under Sudevarāja I. Indrabala, however, occupied the additional position of Dūtaka, under Sudevarāja II. It seems that there was a number of Amātyas in charge of different portfolios in the Central Government. We come across an amātya named Vatsa who is designated as haḍappagraha in the Mallar plates[1] of the ninth regnal year of Jayarāja. Dr. D. C. Sircar[2] rightly thinks that haḍappagraha is no other than haḍappagrahamātya mentioned in the Komkollu plates of the salankāyan king Nandivarman I. Haḍappagrahamātya seems to be the prakritised form of hṛtapragrahamātya who was the minister in charge of seized and stolen goods.[3] He seems to be equivalent to the 'yukta' in charge of 'Pranathādigatadravya' as mentioned in Manusmriti.[4] Such other amātyas must have formed the council of ministers which was probably headed by the Sarvādhikārādhikṛta.

In the bureaucratic structure of Śarabhapura the next officer in gradation seems to be Bhogapati who seems to be identical with Vishayapati. Rāhudeva features as a bhogapati or bhuktipati in the Pipardula copper plate grant of Mahārāja Narendra.[5] He was in all probability the bhogapati of the Nandapura-bhoga. Bhoga being a fiscal term, bhogapati was undoubtedly a collector of revenue in charge of a district. In the Gupta empire bhukti was a large

1 EI, XXXIV, pp. 28-29.
2 Ibid.
3 EI, XXXIV, pp. 28-29.
4 Manu, VII, 145, 149.
5 IHQ, XIX, pp. 139-46.

division comprising several districts but in the kingdom of Śarabhapura 'bhoga' was a smaller division almost equivalent to a district. Village was the lowest unit of administration and it seems that the elders of the various families (Kutumvins) and other inhabitants (Prativāsī) formed a council for the rural administration. It seems that Mahattara, ashṭakūlādhikaraṇa, grāmika and Kutumvina formed the council and helped the bhogapati in matters of administration. For this purpose the king while issuing the land grants or conforming the same commanded the Kutumvīns to honour the royal order.

Records Department

We learn from the epigraphical sources that the Śarabhapurīya monarchs followed the injunctions of the Dharmashāstras and established an office of records and charters relating to fiscal problems and land grants. While issuing the copper plate grants or charters they followed the principles laid down by Yājnavalkya. Yājnavalkya smriti gives the following guidelines for the issue of charters :[1]

Pate va tāmra paṭṭe va svamudropari chinhitam /
Abhilakvyātmāno vamsha nātmanam cha mahīpatih //
Pratigraha parimāṇam dānā chchhedapa varṇaṇam /
Svahastakāla Sampannam Shāsanam Karayet Sthiram //

In accordance with this principle in the kingdom of Śarabhapura charters were issued sometimes in copper plates and the royal seal containing the emblem of Gajalakashmī was affixed to the same. That there was a practice of issuing charters on palm leaves is known to us from the Kurud copper plate[2] grant. Lines 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the Kurud charter reveal that the village Keśavaka was originally granted by Paramabhaṭṭāraka on a palm leaf charter which later on burnt in a conflagration in the house of the donee. The loss of the palm leaf charter led the donee to represent his case before the Government. Consequently, a thorough search was made in the office of the Dūtaka and it was found presumably from an office

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1 Yājnavalkyasmriti, Sanskrit edition by Vasudeva Laxman Shastri Pansikar (1926), p. 10, Vrs. 318-20.

2 EI, XXXI, pp. 263-68.

copy or the issue register with regard to the veracity of the grant. This evidence reveals that copper plate grants were originally written on palm leaves from which copies were engraved on copper plates. This practice was also prevalent in Kangoda which is known from a palm leaf sets of Śailodbhava charters. While copying the Prasasti from a palm leaf charter the engraver has missed one page which led him to continue an incoherent passage in the same. Dr. S. N. Rajguru[1] has drawn our attention to this point in his inscription of Orissa.

The office of the Dūtaka accommodated the department of records in the Sarabhapurīyan State. In fact, Dūtaka[2] was the officer in charge for the issue of charters. The Kurud plates of Mahārāja Narendra and Amgura plates of Jayarāja refer to 'Dūtakam Adhikaraṇa' office of the Dūtaka. meant for the issue of charters. In the Kauvatal plates[3] the Sarvādhikārādhikṛta mahāsāmanta Indrabalarāja who was the chief minister of Sudevarāja II is also styled at Dūtaka. It is evident that the Dūtakka was a man of king's confidence who was authorised for the issue of copper plates along-with the seal. According to Manu the Dūtaka is spoken of as the Chief minister in special confidence of the king.[4] Dr. R. C. Majumdar[5] aptly remarks 'Dūtaka is the royal agent for religious grants and endowments'. This term does not denote any regular officer but usually a high official, sometimes even a crown prince was selected as a Dūtaka. In the Śailodbhava charters dūtaka sometimes appears as Mahāsāmanta, Panchakarmoparika Visvāsika and Pratihārīn.[6]

Pratihāra or Pratihāri was an officer almost equal to the rank of the Dūtaka. In Śailodbhava charters Dūtaka Gangabhadra was a pratihāri.[7] In Śarabhapurīya charters a resourceful landlord

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1 Rajguru, S. N., IO-I, Part II, pp. 248-53.
2 See line 14 of the Kurud plates and lines 17 of the Amgura plates.
3 EI, XXXI, pp. 314-16.
4 Manusmriti, Chapter 7, Vrs. 63-65.
5 Majumdar, R. C., History of Bengal, Vol. I, p. 276.
6 Vide Kondedde, Puri and Banapur plates of Dharmarāja and Buguda plates of Mādhavarāja.
7 IO, Vol. I, Part II, (Vide Buguda plates of Mādhavarāja).

called Bhogilla[1] who donated the village Shivalingika was Pratihāra under Sudevarāja I. In Arthashāstra[2] pratihāra occurs in the second grade of officers alongwith Samaharta and Sannidhāta. Sometimes the feudatories were honoured with this title. In the Gunaigarh charter[3] of Vainyagupta the dūtaka of the grant had the title of Mahāpratihāra.

In the Department of Records the next important officer was the engraver. In the Śarabhapurīyan charters we find the names of the following engravers namely Śrīdatta, Achalasiṃha, Droṇasiṃha, Jyeshthasiṃha and Golasiṃha. Among these engravers Achalasiṃha has been referred to as 'Suvarṇakāra'.[4] This reference indicates that there was a professional class of engravers who were goldsmiths. In the Banapura plates[5] of Dharmarāja one Akshashālika happened to be the engraver. The engraver of the Bahmani plates[6] of the Pāṇḍava king Bharatbala was also a Suvarṇakāra. Dr. Buhler[7] rightly remarks, "in the Kalinga shasanas we find Akshashālis instead of Potto padhyāya ; the term is a sanskritisation of the Telugu and Kannaḍa word Agasāli, a gold-smith". Thus, it is evident that in Kalinga and Kośala goldsmiths were engaged as hereditary engravers of the charters.

Revenue Administration

Land being the nucleus of administration the Śarabhapurīya monarchs like all other rulers of ancient India believed in the expansion of territories at the point of sword. They were practically the master of the land which they conquered by their own might and as such they established their right over their land. But the king in theory was not the owner but the Protector of the land in ancient India according to the injunctions of the Dharma śāstras which the monarch was bound to follow. Kingship as an institution

1 CII, III, p. 190.
2 Samashastry, R., K. A. II, Chapter Five.
3 IHQ, (1930), p. 40.
4 Vide lines 18-19 of Amgura plates of Jayarāja, JESI, IV, pp. 70-75.
5 See line 53 of the plate ; EI, XXIX, p. 38.
6 Vide line 49 of the charter, IO, IV, p. 12.
7 Buhler, Indian Palaeography, p. 102.

emerged out of necessity for the protection of the people. Manu propounded in his smriti : 'The lord created a king for the *protection* of the whole creation'.[1] Thus, protection was the chief duty of the king for which kingship emerged as an institution. Therefore, king in ancient India was the protector of the land who was entitled to get one-sixth of the gross produce of the land (ṣaḍbhāgagrahaṇa). In all the Śarabhapurīya charters the monarchs meticulously followed the injunctions of the smritis. In the imprecatory verses they often cited a verse which meant that Yudhisthira the ideal monarch in Mahābhārata was advised to protect the land in his own State.[2] In ancient Indian concept the king was not the State but merely protector of a State.[3] In actual practice, however, the king being the conqueror of the land by his own might loomed large like a Leviathan. It is no wonder, therefore, that when Meghāsthenes visited India in the time of Chandragupta Maurya he observed that the husband men used to pay a land tribute to the king as the king was the ultimate owner of the land. In the Śarabhapurīya State, therefore, even the venerable Mahāsāmantas while proposing to donate land to the Brāhmaṇas they were bound by law to seek the permission of the monarch as according to the injunctions of Dharmaśāstras. Such a gift village or land was to be honoured as a rent-free land. Out of nineteen copper plate grants of the Śarabhapurīyas at least seven[4] land grants were made by sāmantas, venerable noblemen and the chief queen with the consent of the reigning monarchs. In the case of the grant of the village Keśavaka Sankhasvāmīn had to secure the official permission in the form of a Tāmrashāsana from Mahārāja Narendra in lieu of a tālapatra shāsana, which was granted by an earlier monarch called Parama bhaṭṭāraka to his father Bhaśṛtasvāmīn, as

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1 Manusmriti, Chapter VII, Vrs. 348.

2 Vide lines 20-21, Arang plates of Jayarāja (Svadattāparadattā va yatnāt *raksha* Yudhisṭhira) Cunningham, A.S.R., Vol. XVII, pp. 55-59; Fleet CII, II, p. 191.

3 Majumdar, R. C. and Pushalkar, A. D., The Age of Imperial Unity (1968), p. 307.

4 Vide the preceding Chapter.

the earlier charter was burnt in course of a conflagration.[1] Except in the case of rent free land for all other lands the cultivators were required to pay tax to the monarch in the form what is technically called 'bhoga' or 'rājabhoga' which according to A. N. Bose[2] denotes king's legitimate share of land revenue over and above other taxes. Sri Bose, thus, thinks that the rāja-bhoga or bhoga indicates a partnership of title between the peasant and the king. But such a concept was correct in theory only at the initial stage when the kingship emerged in ancient India. At least from the time of the mighty Mauryas monarchy as an institution grabed almost all powers of the State and he was the fountain of law and justice. In the history of Kalinga and Kośala in the post-Gupta period although the rulers were the champions of vedic rituals they popularised the Divine origin of kingship tracing their descent from sun, moon, rock, egg of a peahen, mythical animal and such other inanimate beings. At critical periods they seized political powers and carved out territories at the point of sword at the expense of the earlier ruling families. Thus, it is evident that although according to the injunctions of Dharmaśāstras the Śarabhapurīya monarchs were the protector of the land, in practice they were the lords of their territories.

Like the Pushyamitras of Mekala the Śarabhapurīyas depended on their treasury and army for their suzerainty over South Kośala and that the treasury of the Śarabhapurīyas was always in plenty is well indicated by a large number of gold coins of Prasannamātra found scattered in different parts of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The epigraphical records indicate that the monarchs of Śarabhapura collected various types of taxes both in cash and in kind to replenish their treasury, although we have no statistics about their annual revenue in their charters. We may suggest a rough schedule in the light of the Dharmaśāstras. According to Śukra[3] that ruler is called a Sāmanta in whose kingdom without oppressing the

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1 Vide Kurud plates of Mahārāja Narendra.

2 Bose, A. N., Social and Rural Economy of Northern India, II, (Calcutta), p. 32.

3 Vide Sacred Book of the Hindus (1923), Vol. XIII.

subjects an annual revenue from 1 lakh upto 3 lakh karshas is regularly realised.... The Mahārāja is he who exceeds the lakhs upto a crore. As the Śarabhapurīyas appear to have risen from Mahā-sāmanta under Paramabhaṭṭāraka to Mahārāja[1] we may presume that their average annual revenue was probably ranging from 5 lakhs to one crore of karshas. This revenue was derived from taxes like bhāga-bhoga, dhānya hiraṇya and various other traditional taxes. Kautilya, Manu, Nārada, Vishnu and Vyāsa have prescribed that land revenue should be the main source of the income of the monarch. Although one-sixth of the gross produce was normally taken as the royal share of the annual yield of the land the rate of tax seems to have varied in consonance with the fertility of the soil.

In all the available Śarabhapurīyan charters the monarchs have commanded the inhabitants of their territory to contribute bhāga and bhoga with all solemnity to the royal treasury. According to Manu[2] the land tax should be one-sixth, one-eighth or one-fourth of the gross produce. Śukranīti[3] informs us that bhāga should be $\frac{1}{6}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$ according to the nature of the soil, rainfall and irrigation facilities. Kautilya[4] has also given similar views. Dr. D. C. Sircar[5] interprets bhāga 'as the king's share of produce'. Dr. R. S. Tripathy[6] thinks that 'bhāga' refers to the share of grain or the share of the produce to be paid to the monarch. Dr. Sircar[7] takes 'bhoga' as periodical contribution of the subject in the form of fruits, firewoods, flowers etc. which the villagers had to furnish to the king. Bhoga in general appears to be an entertainment tax. In the Kurud copper plate grant Mahārāja Narendra has commanded the donee Śankhasvāmīn to contribute dhānya and hiraṇya and other taxes in addition to bhāga and bhoga as the village donated to him was

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1 Śarabha seems to have been a faudatory of the Imperial Gupta but the king Narendra is referred to as Mahārāja Narendra, vide Chapter Four of the present work.

2 Manu, Chapter Seven, Vrs. 127-149.

3 Śukranīti, VI, II, pp. 227-30.

4 Samashastry, R., K.A., II, p. 35.

5 JAS, XVIII, No. 2, p. 79.

6 History of Kanauj, p. 348.

7 See above.

not free from rent. Dhānya seems to be a tax imposed by the State on the excess of the storage of rice over and above a particular ceiling. Hiraṇya was a tax over the accumulation of gold other than the ornaments. In the inscriptions of Harshavardhana[1] terms like bhāga, bhoga and Hiraṇya are often found. With reference to bhāga-bhoga Fleet[2] suggests that the term bhāga-bhoga indicate enjoyment of taxes. But in our opinion bhāga refers to the tax over the gross produce of the land where as bhoga is an entertainment tax. The expression bhāga-bhoga-dhānya-hiraṇya may stand for dhānya-hiraṇya in the form of bhāga-bhoga. But apparently, bhāga-bhoga dhānya-hiraṇya were four different types of taxes.

In addition to these taxes the Śarabhapurīya kings seem to have collected the revenue from various other sources like Vasu, go, nidhi and upanidhi. In their charters they proclaimed that they were the givers of wealth, land and cows (Vasuvasudhā goprada) alongwith treasure troves (nidhi) and sealed deposits (upanidhi). From such proclamations we may infer that although they donated the above items occasionally to learned brāhmaṇas for Patronage of culture they must have also collected taxes on the same from the inhabitants of their territory.

The Śarabhapurīya monarchs, obviously, collected taxes indicating various types of wealth such as forest wealth or jungle products, lost property (apahṛtadhana), mines, monopoly of salt etc. They also appear to have collected tax over cattle. Manu says 'a fiftieth of cattle and gold may be taken by the king'.[3] He also awards the king a sixth part of trees, meat, honey, clarified water, perfumes, medical herbs, substances used for flavouring food, flowers, roots, fruits and all articles made of stone.[4] The Śarabhapurīyan kings very probably collected taxes over all such articles as well as over nidhi and upanidhi. Nidhi and Upanidhi were also sources of income for the States. These two items were connected with the

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1 EI, VII, p. 157 ff.
2 CII, III, p. 254 n.
3 Manu, op.cit.
4 Ibid, Majumdar, R. C. and Pushalkar, A. D., The Age of Imperial Unity (1968), p. 329.

treasure-troves where the king was entitled to retain at least one-sxith, one-tenth or at least one-twelfth of the lost property (apahṛtadhana). Special officials were posted in charge of such deposits. According to tradition if the king found any wealth he was entitled to procure one-half of it and the remaining half was to be distributed among the brāhmaṇas.[1]

In Śarabhapurīya polity the king discharged his duties in accordance with his discretion as well as the injunctions of the dharma shāstras. He was the head of the body-politic and the most important limb of the State. The Śarabhapurīya monarchs followed the saptānga theory of State and the Svāmī or the monarch who was at the apex of the administrative structure directed the policy of the State keeping the other important limbs in proper order for the sound administration of the country namely Amātya, Jana, Durga, Koṣa, Daṇḍa and Mitra. The king's interest was identified with the happiness of the subject he tried his best to make them happy at all levels. The brāhmaṇas, sāmantas, artisans, śudras and all other prativāsīs and kutamvīns were happy under the rule of the Śarabhapurīyas. The Śarabhapurīyan monarchs constructed the hill-forts (Giridurga) of Śarabhapura in the dense forest of Maraguda valley in accordance with the injunctions of Yājnavalkya[2] and later on constructed other forts at Śrīpura and Prasannapura for the safety of the territory. They collected revenue according to the prevailing laws to enrich the treasury and depended upon the elephantry as their main stay of military strength. They entered into matrimonial alliance with the neighbouring Pāṇḍava family of Mekala, presumably with the intention of uniting the force of the two countries to save South Kośala from Harsha-Pulakeśīn war. Thus, with all these potentialities of the State craft the kings of the royal house of Śarabhapura ruled over the people of South Kośala through an organised bureaucracy with their administrative sagacity and obedience to the benign principles of Dharma shāstras. They rendered lasting contributions to the polity of South Kośala.

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1 Majumdar, R. C. and Pushalkar, A. D., The Age of Imperial Unity (1968), p. 329.

2 Ramyam Pasavyam Ājivyam, jangalam deśamavaset l
Tatra durgīni kurvita janakosātma guptaye
Pansikar, V. L. (Ed) Yājnavalkya Smriti, Vrs. 320, p. 100.

Chapter Ten

CAPITAL OF THE ŚARABHAPURĪYAS

The original sources do not explicitly reveal any information with regard to the identification of the capital of South Kośala during and after the southern expedition of Samudragupta upto the end of the Śarabhapurīya ascendancy. In the fag end of the fifth century A.D. Śarabha, a tribal chief of eminence, very probably identical with Śarabharāja of the Eran Stone inscription, laid the foundation of the kingdom of Śarabhapura and established the capital, and named after him. Proper identification of the capital city of Śarabhapura has been a controversial issue due to lack of any clue in the charters of the Śarabhapurīyas. Out of nineteen copper plate grants twelve were issued from Śarabhapura[1], four from Śrīpura[2], identified with Sirpur, one from Tilakeśvara[3], one from Prasannapura[4] and the place of issue of the remaining single stray plate[5] is not known. There is no doubt that Śarabhapura was the capital of the kingdom of Śarabhapura and that Śrīpura was the capital of the collateral junior line of the Śarabhapurīyas.

The Śarabhapurīya charters do not reveal any topographical feature of the capital. The epigraphical records do not say whether the capital was situated by the side of a river or a mountain. Indigenous literature also does not throw any light with regard to the capital of Kośala or Śarabhapura. Scholars have, therefore, depended upon circumstantial evidences and similarity of names in proposing various identifications of the capital of Śarabhapura.

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1 All copper plates of the king Narendra, Jayarāja and Sudevarāja I except the Kurud plates of Narendra were issued from Śarabhapura.

2 The Mallar and Takurdiya plates of Pravararāja and the Kauvatal and Mahasamund plates of Sudevarāja II were issued from Sirpur.

3 Kurud plate of Narendra.

4 Mallar plates of Vyāghrarāja was issued from Prasannapura.

5 Two plates of Pokhra grant are missing.

Cunningham[1] was at first inclined to identify Śarabhapura with Arabhapur or Arbhi, the headquarters of the Arvi tahsil of the Wardha district. He proposed his identification by suggesting the elision of the initial 'S' from the word Śarabhapura. His alternate proposition was that Śarabhapura might be identical with modern Sambalpur in Western Orissa. Konow[2] pointed out the improbability of this identification. Fleet[3] was of opinion that if the name of Śarabhapura still survives at all in any corrupted form it could be Sarbha or Sabhar. Such names, however, are not traceable in the maps of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. While commenting on the Sarabhavaram plates Stenkonow had the view that present Sarbhavaram of Andhra Pradesh could be the same as ancient Śarabhapura.[4] He further pointed out that similar names including Śarabhapura are located in the vicinity of Sarabhavaram. He however, proposed this identification as a loose-guess. By no stretch of imagination we can associate the Śarabhapurīyas with Andhra Pradesh. Rai Bahadur Hiralal[5] who was of the opinion that the Śarabhapurīyas ousted the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs, held the view that the Śarabhpurīyas renamed the city of Śrīpura as Śarabhapura. But now there is no shadow of doubt that the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs ousted the Śarabhapurīyas and occupied the cities of Śarabhapura and Śrīpura which in our opinion was the capital of the junior line of the Śarabhapurīyas. Śarabhapura cannot be considered to be identical with Śrīpura. While Śrīpura continued to be the capital of the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs, Śarabbapura was wiped out from the pages of history with the fall of the Śarabhapurīyas. L. P. Pandeya[6] at one time proposed to identify Śarabhapura with Śarabhagarh, the chief town of the ex-State of Gangpur in Orissa. Subsequently, he revised his view and suggested that Śarabhapura might be identical with Sarawa, near Sheorinarayan or with Sarbhar near Nandaur in the Bilaspur district.[7] These suggestions are regarded

1 ASI, XVII, p. 57 ff.
2 EI, XIII, p. 108.
3 CII, III, p. 91.
4 EI, XIII, p. 108.
5 EI, XI, p. 186 ff, also proceedings of 5th Oriental Conference, p. 461.
6 Ibid.
7 IHQ, XV, p. 475.

by Dr. Ajoy Mitra Sastri[1] as plausible although he does not accept them as final answer to the question of the identification of Śarabhapura. Acceptance of L. P. Pandey's theory on the ground of phonetic similarity is not possible although it is a leading point for the identifications. Pandey's contention that most of the copper plate grants and coins are found in the locality of Sarva near Sheorinarayan and, therefore, it should be the capital, is untenable as Śarabhapurīya charters and coins are found in several districts of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Dr. D. C. Sircar[2] thinks that Śarabhapura was located near Śrīpura, identified with Sirpur near Raipur in Madhya Pradesh as source inscriptions issued from Śarabhapura have been found in the Raipur district. M. G. Dixit[3] supported the arguments of D. C. Sircar by citing the discovery of a coin of Prasannamātra in the lowest stratum in the excavation at Sirpur which was caused by building structures attributed to the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs. He, therefore, concluded that the early kings of Śarabhapurīya family were associated with Śrīpura. But it is well known that the early kings of this family till the reign of Pravararāja had nothing to do with Śrīpura. Ajay Mitra Sastri[4] has shown correctly that the two cities of Śarabhapura and Śrīpura were far-off from each other. In fact the charters of Sudevarāja I issued from Śarabhapura and those of Pravararāja and Sudevarāja II issued from Śrīpura were engraved by two different persons. Again the discovery of one gold coin of Prasannamātra in the lowest stratum at Sirpur need not necessarily lead us to the conclusion that Śrīpura was the capital of the early Śarabhapurīya monarchs. The Śarabhapurīya kings of the junior line very probably accepted the gold coins of Prasannamātra as legal tender. Our contention is that Śrīpura was the capital of the junior line of the Śarabhapurīyas from the time of Pravararāja. Late Dr. R. L. Mitter[4] held the view that Sambalpur was the ancient capital city of Śarabhapura. It may be pointed out that not a single Śarabhapurīya

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1 Prāchya Pratibhā (1978), Vol. I, pp. 1-40.
2 IHQ, XIX, p. 144 ; EI, XXXIII, p. 155.
3 EI, XXXI, p. 264 ; Bajpai, K. D. and Pandey, S. K., Mallar (1978), p. 25.
4 Prāchya Pratibhā (1977), January, Vol. V, No. 1, pp. 14-20.
5 Proceedings of 5th Oriental Conference, p. 461.

charter or coin have been found at Sambalpur. No place name of the Śarabhapurīya charters has been so far identified in the vicinity of Sambalpur. Sambalpur which might be the same as Sambalaka of Ptolemy, had nothing to do with Śarabhapura. B. V. Krishna Rao[1] hold the view that the ancient capital city being ruined must have gone out of existence. Prof. K. D. Bajpai and Dr. S. K. Pandey have postulated the latest theory on the issue on the basis of the excavation findings of Mallar.[2] They identify Śarabhapura with Malhar (Mallālapathan in the Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh) situated at a distance of 35 Kms each of Bilaspur town.[3] Their first contention is that the clay seal[4] found at Malhar bearing the legened Mahārāja Mahendrasya in the Brāhmi characters of the Gupta variety indicates that the capital of Mahendra was located at Malhar. They identified Mahendra of the clay seal with the Mahendra of Allahabad Pillar inscription and associate him with Śarabhapurīya kings. In their own words, if Mahendra can be attached to any dynasty, it is only that of 'Śarabhapura and none else'.[5] Identification of Mahendra of the Malhar clay seal with Mahendra of the Allahabad inscription is quite reasonable but the same Mahendra cannot be attached to the Śarabhapurīya family because Mahendra of the Allahabad Pillar inscription belongs to the fourth century A.D. while the Śarabhapurīya family founded by Śarabha, easily identified with Śarabharāja of the Eran Stone Inscription by the fag end of the fifth century A.D. Their second argument that the stone temples of the Śarabhapurīya period in the vicinity of Malhar by itself is not a positive proof to indicate that Malhar was the capital because temples exist in various parts of the territory and not in the capital alone. Again Bajpai and Pandey argue[6] that Malhar having a proper defence around it and a well planned township with proper roads fulfils the requirement of a capital. It is true that Malhar fulfils the requirements of the capital but that

1 Krishna Rao, B. V., EHD (1942), p. 647 ff.
2 Bajpai, K. D. and Pandey, S. K., Malhar (1977-78), p. 25-29 ff.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Bajpai, K. D. and Pandey, S. K., Malhar (1978), p. 25-29 ff.
6 Ibid.

does not mean that it should be the capital of the Śarabhapurīyas. It is well known from the inscriptional sources that Mallālapattana which is undoubtedly identical with Malhar was the capital of the Kalachuris[1]. The Kalachuris might have named the city as Mallālapattana after the name of Malhāri Śiva[2] or the city might have been named after Malladeva oft he Bāṇa dynasty.[3] In either case it is not possible to argue to the contention of Bajpai and Pandey that Śarabhapura was the name of Mallālapattana. Dr. Bajpai and Dr. Pandey have argued that the villages mentioned in the Pipardula and Kurud plates of Narendra, Arang and Mallar plates of Jayarāja, Raipur plates of Sudevarāja, Thakurdiya and Mallar plates of Pravararāja and the Mallar plates of Vyāghrarāja are identified within a radius of 50 Kilometers from Malhar. Therefore, in their opinion 'the claim of Malhar as the capital of the Śarabhapurīya can thus be established'. But it may be pointed out here that there are also place-names in the charters of the Śarabhapurıya kings discovered in the Khariar-regions of the Kalahandi district of Orissa which are identified with the places of the same region. From the above discussion it appears that the theory postulated by Bajpai and Pandey with regard to the identification of Śarabhapura with Malhar does not stand on unimpeachable grounds. We are of the opinion that the site of Malhar and its surroundings were no doubt the regions where Śarabhapurīya culture exists in the form of monumental remains. But the cultural remains do not necessarily prove that Malhar was the capital of the Śarabhapurīyas. There are cultural archaeological remains of Śarabhapurīya periods also found at Khariar and its vicinity and particularly the Mārāguḍā valley which in our opinion was the site of the ancient city of Śarabhapura which was the hill capital (Giridurga) of the Śarabhapurīyas. The reasons in support of our contention are given below :

1. With due difference to the learned scholar who have studied the question of the identification of Śarabhapura we are to record here that none of them has studied the answer the question in the

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1 CII, IV, p. 506, Verse 23 ; p. 515, Vrs. 21.

2 Bajpai, K. D. and Pandey, S. K., Malhar (1978), pp. 25-29.

3 Ibid.

light of the testimony of Hiuen Tsang.[1] It is well known to us that the Chinese pilgrim having completed his tour in Wutā, Kong-u-to and Kie-ling-Kia visited South Kośala in 639 A.D. when Jayarāja had ceased to rule and Sudevarāja I possibly succeeded to rule in the kingdom of Śarabhapura according to our system of chronology.[2] There is no doubt that the vast and prosperous rule of Śarabhapura comprising a considerable part of South Kośala has deen referred to by the Chinese Pilgrim as Kia-sa-lo or Kośala. The Pilgrim records that he covered a distance of about 1800 li to come to the country of Kośala from Kalinga. It seems that the pilgrim recorded this approximate distance from Kalinganagari, identified with Mukhalingam, near Paralakhemundi, to Śarabhapura, the capital of South Kośala during the period. The pilgrim says that he covered the distance 1800 li going in the north western direction through forests and mountains.[3] If we measure the distance from Mukhalingam to Mārāguḍā located in the Northern Boarder of Kalahandi District of Orissa we find that it is 290 Kilo meters as the crow flies. But the pilgrim says that he had to go 'through forests and mountains' to cover the distance of 1800 li. As per the accepted conversion 1 mile=6 li. According to this table the pilgrim travelled a distance of 300 miles=500 Kilo meters. We, in order to cross mountains, valleys and forests and circuitus routes around the mountains presume that the distance from Mukhalingam to Mārāguḍā as covered by the pilgrim must be about two hundred kilo meters, more than the distance shown as the crow flies. The pilgrim must have travelled through the accepted route from Kalinga to Kośala and certainly it is humanly impossible to travel the distance as the crow flies. We are therefore, inclined to believe that the pilgrim must have covered a distance of about 300 miles on foot to reach the capital Kośala at Śarabhapura, identified by us with Maraguda. If Śarabhapura is identified with either Malhar as proposed by Bajpai and Pandey or with Sarva near Sheorinarayan as suggested by L. P. Pandey it is

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1 Beal, S., Travels of Hoiuen Tshiang, p. 415-16.

2 Vide Chapter Three of the present work.

3 See above.

impossible to show that the distance from Mukhalingam to either of the two places would be 300 miles by the normal route.

II. In the early mediaeval period many capital cities were built in the backgrounds of hills for the protection of the people. Yājñavalkya writes in his smriti that a hill fort was to be built in a forest area which would be charming, rich in cattle wealth and cultivable land for the living of the people. In the light of this canonical injunction it is quite likely that Śarabha or Śarabharāja being a tribal chief must have laid the foundation of the capital in the background of a hill. The Mārāguḍā valley is an interesting and charming archaeological site in the Nawapara Sub-Division of the Kalahandi District of Orissa. The valley covers a land scape of about 6 or 7 miles in circuit corresponding to the pilgrims account that the capital was about 40 li in circuit (about 6 or 7 miles).

III. In the vicinity of Mārāguḍā valley a copper plate grant of king Jayarāja has been discovered from Amguda and a charter of Sudevarāja I has been discovered from Khariar in the Kalahandi district of Orissa. We have identified Rājyagrāma of the Amgura plates with Rajna in the vicinity of Mārāguḍā. Navannaka and Sāmbilaka of the Khariar plates of Sudevarāja I are identical with Nehena and Sanduhal respectively located in the close vicinity of Khariar.

IV. It is striking to note that Sri Jitamitra Prasad Singh Deo of Khariar has found out 11 Goldcoins of King Prasannamātra from Nehena, not far from Mārāguḍā. Out of these eleven gold coins, four are preserved in the Sambalpur University Museum, one in the Orissa State Museum and the remaining six are at present in the possession of Sri J. P. Singh Deo. The finding of these gold coins of Prasannamātra in the vicinity of Mārāguḍā leads us to believe that the capital was located in the Mārāguḍā Valley.

V. We have discovered a clay seal of Nanna (Fig. 1) in the Mārāguḍā valley itself. The seal is now preserved in the Sambalpur University Museum. This Nanna is identical with Nannarāja I, son of Indravala. His name is also mentioned in the Sirpur plates of Sudevarāja I as the venerable Nanna who made the land grant which was later on confirmed by king Sudevarāja I. We have also

shown earlier that Nannadeva of Mārāguḍā clay seal is also identical with 'Nannarājādhirāja' of the Bhandak Inscription. Nanna was a powerful Mahāsāmanta who seems to have seized the kingdom of Śarabhapura after the death of Sudevarāja I. The discovery of the clay seal of Nanna at Mārāguḍā is a strong evidence to indicate that Mārāguḍā was the capital of Śarabhapura where confidential seals and records were preserved. The clay seal of Nanna, indeed a unique discovery has to be associated with the capital of the Śarabhapurīyas which was captured by Nannadeva of the Pānduvaṃśī line.

VI. Mārāguḍā appears to be a rich archaeological site on the border of Bastar, Raipur districts of Madhya Pradesh and the Kalahandi district of Orissa. Unfortunately no excavation has yet been done in this area and it is going to be submerged very shortly under water of the Jonk Dam Project. On the surface of the valley a broken hand of the image of Vishnu has been recovered by the Deptt. of Cultural Affairs, Govt. of Orissa and at present it is preserved in the Orissa State Museum. There are a good number of mounds in the Mārāguḍā valley spread over an area of about seven miles in circuit. In this deserted area thinly populated by tribal people here and there, there are long roads which cross each other at right angles indicating the remains of a planned town. Not far from Mārāguḍā at Khariar road we have noticed an interesting image of Viṣnu (Fig. 18) which on iconographic considerations has been assigned by us to the seventh century A.D. The image seems to be a relic of the Śarabhapurīyas who were devout worshippers of Lord Viṣnu.

VII. The name Mārāguḍā leads us to presume that in all probability it is a 'apabhramsa' of the original term Amaragaḍa. Even the name Amgura or Amguda where a charter of Jayarāja has been discovered seems to be a corrupted form of Amaragaḍa. We have attempted to presume that Amaragaḍa was probably associated with the gaḍa (garh)[1] hill fort of the Amarajakula of South Kośala mentioned in the Bahmani plates of Bharatavala. We have accepted the view of Dr. D. C. Sircar that Amarajakula is identical with the

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1 There are several names of the plates ending with garh such as Manikgarh, Jumlagarh, Tanotgarh which are adjacent to Mārāguḍā or Amaragaḍa as discussed in Chapter Two of the present work.

Amarārya family which is no other than the royal house of Śarabhapura. Thus in the light of the report of Hiuen-Tsang, canonical injunctions of the smritis, availability of inscriptions and coins and a few archaeological remains, the unique discovery of the clay seal of Nanna in the Mārāguḍā valley proper and our contention that Mārāguḍā may be a corrupted form of Amaragaḍa (Amargarh) lead us to the very probable hypothesis that the site of Mārāguḍā was the site of the hill-foot of Śarabhapura.

Chapter Eleven

SOCIAL CONDITION OF ŚARABHAPURA

The South Indian campaign of Samudragupta (c. 350 A.D.) is a land mark in the growth and development of Hindu social system in Kośala and Kalinga. The Gupta conquest opened a powerful channel for the flow of the stream of Brāhminical thought from the North to the South. South Kośala was not only the first country to be conquered in the Dakshiṇapath campaign of Samudragupta it had also the privilege of being influenced by the cultural of the Gupta age. The momentum which the Gupta invasion provided towards the development of Brahminism was accelerated in Kośala in the fifth and sixth centuries of the Christian era. The Guptas who were linked with the Vākāṭakas by a matrimonial alliance had exerted overwhelming influence over Koṡala, although the territory was not annexed by Samudragupta into the Gupta empire. The Vākāṭakas had also conquered portions of Kośala for sometime particularly in the time of Narendrasena and left their indelible impact of Brāhmaṇism on the soil of South Kośala. In the Vākāṭaka-Gupta age Manu was considered to be the authority of socio-political system and we learn from Kālidāsa[1] that under Dilīpa his subjects did not deviate even by a hairsbreadth from the norm fixed by Manu. Laws of Manu as edified by Yājñavalkya, were tacitly followed by the Mātharas of Kalinga and the Śarabhapurīyas of South Koṡala. The Mātharas of Kalinga are known to have converted several village into Agraharas, free from all taxes, and such villages being inhabited by Brāhmaṇas became centres of learning. This benevolent patronage of Brāhmaṇism was also adopted by the Śarabhapurīyas who like the Nalas and the Mātharas were great champions of Brāhmaṇism and Vaiṣnavism in the sixth century A.D.

The social system of South Kośala was characterised by the four fold division of the society under the benign rule of the Śarabhapurīyas. In the social structure of Śarabhapura the Brāhmaṇas were

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1 Raghuvamsa : Canto I, Vr. 7.

at the apex. Among the four varnas Brāhmaṇas, according to Manu,[1] had the special privilege to teach the Vedas and they were considered to be the law givers. According to Itsing[2] they were regarded throughout the four quarters of India as the most honourable people. In the kingdom of Śarabhapura the kings duly honoured the Brāhmaṇas. While declaring land grants they first addressed the Brāhmaṇas[3], who headed the list of persons in the Śarabhapurīya charters. It was almost obligatory on the part of the monarch to donate lands and cows to the learned Brāhmaṇas. The rent-free land which were once donated by the kings, belonged to the Brāhmaṇas so long as the sun, the moon and the stars endure.[4] Only in the case of rent-free lands donees were exempted from all taxes; otherwise the Brāhmaṇas were not exempted from taxation. That the Brāhmaṇas were also asked to pay taxes is indicated by the Kurud plates which reveal that Śankhasvāmīn, son of Bhāshrutasvāmin was asked to pay bhāga-bhoga-dhānya and hiraṇya as the grant originally made by the Paramabhaṭṭāraka was confirmed by the Śarabhapurīya monarch Mahārāja Narendra.

The epigraphic sources reveal that the Śarabhapurīya kings converted several villages into Agrahāras and donated the same in the form of bhaṭṭabritti to the learned Brāhmaṇas called svāmīns.[5] Askhshnasvamy Aiyanger[6] aptly remarks, "Bhaṭṭabritti is usually a piece of land given to a learned Brahmin to provide for his living with a view to ensuring the pursuit of his callings, namely the propagation of learning". Further he indicates on the basis of Dharmaśāstras[7] that a battle should not be a native of the village and must come and settle down from another village, (ii) ought to be able to teach Paṇinis, Asthadhyāyī and Alomkarashastra. The

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1 Manusmriti VI, 147-149.

2 Records, p. 182.

3 See lines 2-3 of the Rawan plate, Brāhmaṇādi prativāsi Kuṭumvinah samājnāpayati, JESI, VI, pp. 44-45.

4 Prāchyapratībhā, Vol. V, No. 1, p. 46 ; See line 7 of the Mahasamund plates of Sudevarāja II.

5 Dictionary meaning of Svāmīn is learned Brahmin.

6 IHQ (1940), XVI, p. 380.

7 Ibid, p. 382.

donees of the Śarabhapurīya charters have been referred to as svāmis who seem to have been invited by the kings of Kośala for the propagation of the Bhāgavata-cult of which they were great champions. It is also striking to note that donees like Svāmippa of Pipardula grant, Visnu svāmīn of Amgura grant of Jayarāja and Khariar grant of Sudevarāja I, Brahmadeva svāmī of Arang grant of Jayarāja, Bhaṭṭa Purandar svāmī of the Kauvatal grant, Mādhāva chaturveda svāmī of Mahasamund grant of Sudevarāja II and Dikshita Anantasvāmī of the Pokhar grant belonged to the Vājasanaya charaṇa which is a part of Śukla Yadurveda. We learn from the Soro[1] and Balasore[2] plates of Somadatta and Bhānu that Brāhmaṇa of Vājasanayacharaṇa were patronised in Odraviśaya and virāja. The Puri plates[3] of Dharmarāja II and the Kondedde[4] and Chaṇḍeśvara plates[5] as well as the Khurda[6] refer to Brāhmaṇas of Vājasanayacharaṇa as the donees of land grant in Kongoda. Bishamagiri plates[7] of Indravarma of Svetaka also refer to Yakshyasvāmī who belonged to the same charaṇa. A study of the epigraphic evidences indicates that Vājasaneyins flourished in the coastal tract of Orissa, hilly tracts of western Orissa and the Chhatisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh. McDonald rightly points out, 'the school of Vājasaneyins, highly honoured in Ayodhya in the Rāmāyaṇa spread towards the South east down the Ganges valley.[8] Obviously, the Brāhmaṇas of Śukla Yajurveda were invited by the kings of Kalinga and Kośala for the establishment of vedic culture in their territories.[9] The Śarabhapurīya copper plate grants also reveal that on auspicious occasions like lunar eclipse,[10] solar eclipse, Uttarayaṇa Puṇyakāla[11] charities were rendered by the Princes and people in South Kośala.

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1 EI, XXIII, pp. 203-4.
2 IHQ, XI, pp. 611-18.
3 JBORS, XVI, pp. 176-88.
4 EI, XIX, pp. 265-70.
5 JKHRS, II, No. 1, pp. 59-72.
6 JASB (1904), LXXVIII, Part I, pp. 282-86.
7 History of Sanskrit literature, p. 176.
8 Ibid.
9 Vide History of Indian people, Vol. I, p. 347.
10 EI, XXXIII, pp. 155 56.
11 Vide Sudevarāja I, Raipur plates (CII, III, pp. 196-97).

Jayarāja is known to have donated the village Kadambapradullaka of Antaranālaka vishaya to Kapārdisvāmīn on the occasion of lunar eclipse. Sudevarāja I is known to have confirmed the donation of the village Śrīsahika[1] in the Pūrvarāshṭra made by Sāvitrīsvāmīn to two of his sons-in-law Nāgavatsasvāmī and Bandhuvatsasvāmī on the occasion of his daughters marriage ceremony on the 9th day of Magha corresponding to Uttarayaṇa Puṇyakāla of Makara Sankranti. Grants were also made by the kings on the occasion of sacred dips in Ganges (Gangāyām majjana kurvadbhī).

It seems that under Śarabhapurīyas the people of South Kośala observed Luni solar system which was also observed by the Mātharas of Kalinga in the fifth century A.D. Arang plate grant of Jayarāja has been issued on 25 day of Mārgaśira, Mallar plates of Vyāghrarāja have been issued on the 27th day of Pauṣa, Khariar grant of Sudevarāja I had been issued on the 29th day of Śrāvana and the Arang plates of Sudevarāja had been issued on the 29th day of Vaiśākha. These reckonings indicate that the people observed the solar system. But at the same time the references to the months like Mārgaśira, Pauṣa, Śrāvana and Vaiśākha indicate that there was also the prevalence of lunar system. It was more or less a luni-solar system that prevailed in Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas. In our opinion the lunar month in Kośala during the period under review was 'Amānta' and not 'Purṇimānta'. Dr. Ajayamitra Shastri says[2] the epigraphs themselves afford absolutely no clue to ascertain as to whether the month was intended to be Purṇimānta or Amānta. However, in the light of records of the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs he is inclined to suggest, it is, therefore, very likely not almost certain that in the Śarabhapurīya charters also the Purṇimānta scheme was intended. We, however, notice a clue in the Mallar plates of Jayarāja which reveal that the village Kadamba pradullaka was donated to Kapārdisvāmīn on the occasion of lunar eclipse which naturally corresponds to Purnimā or the fullmoon day. But the charter was issued on the 5th day of Kārtika which indicates that on the occasion of Kārtika the village was donated and in the next dark half on the 5th day it

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1 Ibid.

2 Prāchya Pratibhā (1977), Vol. V, p. 10.

was endorsed by a charter. Thus it is evident that in the kingdom of Śarabhapura, the bright half was followed by the dark half and therefore the month was intended to be Amānta not Purṇimānta.

In the social structure of the Śarabhapura the Kshyatriyas were next to the Brāhmaṇas. The ruling chiefs who always claimed to be Kshyatriyas were required to uphold the vedas and champion the cause of Brahminism. They were enjoined to study Unvikshikī (metaphysic), trayī (triple vedas), varta (Agraria economy) and daṇḍanīti (science of administration). This Kautilyan injunction was followed by the kings of Kalinga and Kośala in the post-Gupta period. The chief duties of the Kshyatriyas was to fight against the enemies and save the country from external aggression. The ruling chiefs of Śarabhapura used to launch campaign against their enemies and on the occasion of victory they used to donate villages to commemorate such occasions. In accordance with this practice Maharājā Narendra confirmed the grant of the village Keśavaka in favour of Śankhasvāmin and issued the charter from the victorious military camp of Tilakeśvara.

The Śarabhapurīya charters reveal that in South Kośala there flourished several sāmantas and mahāsāmantas who seem to have belonged to the Kshyatriya class. Very often they assume the role of the feudal lords and exercised overwhelming influences on the socio-political life of the country. Very often they were the scions of the royal house of Śarabhapura ; sometimes they hailed from the Paṇḍava lineage of Mekala. Indravalarāja[1] who is referred to as Mahāsāmanta, was the chief minister of Sudevarāja II and he also assumed the office of Dūtaka. His son Nanna[2] who is described in the Bhandak inscription[3] as 'Nannarājādhirāja' played a similar role in the court of Sudevarāja I.

In the society of Śarabhapura there existed the Vaishyas who belonged to the artisan class and it seems that sometimes they performed cultivation, cattle rearing and commercial transaction.

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1 Vide the Kauvatal grant of Sudevarāja II (EI, XXXI, pp. 314-16) and Mahasamund plates (JESI, V, pp. 93-97).

2 Rajguru, S. N., IO, IV, pp. 287-93.

3 Ibid.

The people of the industrial and business classes who are described in Rigveda as traditional section of society, belonged to the Vaishya class and they must have contributed richly to the economic development of the country. We learn from the Amgura plates of Jayarāja that Achalasiṃha who engraved the charter was a Suvarṇakāra or a goldsmith who might have been also appointed as an officer in charge of the mint. Suvarṇa not only means gold it also refers to a particular denomination of gold coin. Like Goldsmiths people of various vocations must have existed in Śarabhapura. Quite a large number of people of Vaishya community were either cultivators or cowherds. The remaining section of the Vaishya community belonged to various vocations. That the Vaishyas were economically prosperous in South Kośala is indicated by the fact that Surabala had to purchase the village sangama from a Vaishya named Bota to donate the same for the maintenance of the temple of Jayeśvarabhaṭṭāraka.[1] This evidence indicates that the Vaishyas rose to the position of land-owning aristocrats of the society in South Kośala.

The inscriptions of Śarabhapurīyas do not specifically refer to the Śudras who according to the traditional four fold division of the society belonged to the lowest rank. The charters only refer to Prativāshins and Kutambins who must have comprised the Śudras among other castes. In addition to the four divisions of the society, there also existed the tribal people like Pulindas, Sabaras and Kiratas who lived in the forest of the Vindhyas and other mountain ranges in South Kośala. We learn from Bāṇas' Harsha charita that the tribal chief called Śarabhaketu flourished in the Vindhyan ranges in South Kośala. Very probably the progenitor of the royal house of Śarabhapura had some sort of connection with the tribal people of the Vindhyas. In the Mallar plates of Jayarāja a donee called Rudrasvāmīn who has been referred to as sabara-bhogika. From this reference it is indicated that there was in all probability an administrative division called Sabarabhoga corresponding to a forest region largely inhabited by the Sabaras.

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1 JESI, III, pp. 183-93.

With regard to the general condition of the people of South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas Hiuen-Tsang observes, 'The men are tall and black complexioned. The disposition of the people is hard and violent, they are brave and impetous, there are both heretics and believers here. They are earnest in study and of high intelligence'. This brief reference to the general disposition of the people in the accounts of Hiuen-Tsang indicates that the people of Śarabhapura were great fighters and their daring nature must have gone a long way in driving out the foreign enemies from the kingdom of Śarabhapura. The pilgrims' reference to the heretics and believers of South Kośala reveals that there was peaceful co-existence of orthodox and heterodox schools. In spite of the royal patronage of the Bhāgabata cult a large number of Buddhists seem to have flourished in South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas.

Spread of Bhāgabata cult in South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas led to the construction of several temples in the country. Such places of worship were also utilised as centres of education and learning. The Śarabhapurīya kings who converted several villages into agrahāras and invited several learned Brahmanas from different countries for the spread of culture were also keen to bring about a cultural regeneration in their country by taking special care for the development of temples and monasteries. We learn from the Rawan plates that Mahārāja Narendra donated all the sources of revenue of the village Ārāmaka for the maintenance of the temple of Śrīdharasvāmin in Manṭarājabhukti. Temples and monasteries, indeed, formed the nucleus of the socio-cultural life of the people under the Śarabhapurīyas.

Women in the public life of Śarabhapura are not known to have taken any active role. Very rarely, however, we sometime find a queen making land grants to learned Brāhmaṇas. In the Sarangarh plates of Sudevarāja I Rājyamahādevī is known to have donated the village Chullāndaraka in Tundaraka Bhukti. From the various gold coins of Prasannamātra and seals of Śarabhapurīya charters we understand that Lakshmi, the Goddess of prosperity found a prominent place in the kingdom of Śarabhapura. It is customary to identify the house-wives with the Goddess Lakshmi and as such

they were highly honoured in the society. From the depiction of Lakshmi on the seals of Śarabhapurīyas we get some clue with regard to the dress of women in the period under review. The ladies used to wear sāri and bodiees. Most of the women used different flowers and probably some scented objects to decorate their body but lotus was perhaps the best of flowers which they like for decoration.

People of South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas lived happily in the midst of plenty and prosperity. They co-operated with the rulers by contributing all sorts of taxes like bhāga-bhoga, dhānya-hiraṇya. Agriculture was the main-stay of their economic prosperity. From a close study of the inscriptions, however, we gather that there was a sort of feudal structure through the medium of land tenure. Out of nineteen Śarabhapuriya charters known to us at least six were issued by land-owning aristocrats who must have acquired the status of Śrī Sāmanta or Mahāsāmanta. It is quite probable that powerful Mahāsāmantas like Indrabala, Nannadeva, Rahudeva, Vatsa, Bhogilla, Sāvitrīsvāmīn and Daṇḍachakra enjoyed the status of feudal lords who were in possession of several villages in the kingdom of Śarabhapura. They could donate villages to learned Brāhmaṇas and their own relatives with the formal permission of ruling monarchs. Obviously, there was a Sāmanta-chakra or a group of feudal lords which was the prop of monarchy for a considerable period. When the Sāmanta or the same nobility under Nanna and Indrabala tightened the grip over the monarchy there was a fall of the Śarabhapurīyas.

The Chinese pilgrim who visited the kingdom of Śarabhapura in 639 A.D. observed about the soil and fertility of the kingdom. He noticed forests and jungles in succession. He found that the soil of South Kośala was rich and fertile and yielded abundant crops. The pilgrim further observed that the towns and villages were close together. The main occupation of the rural population was agriculture. The cultivators appears to have stored rice for years due to abundant crops and they also paid a tax called Dhānya over such excess of storage of rice. Very often the cultivators depended upon rainfall for water supply. However, the Mahanadi with its various

tributaries undoubtedly provided a rich source of water supply for the agrarian development of the people. The kings sometimes excavated tanks and wells for the water supply. Line 25 of the Raipur charter of Sudevarāja I refers to an irrigation well called Śrīvāpikka which was excavated within the mound on the land by the side of the eastern tank. The Śarabhapurīyan monarchs who stood for the welfare and happiness of the people of the country side are thus known to have performed welfare activities for the good of the people at large.

The kings of Śarabhapura were equally interested for the development of urban economy and the prosperity of the urban population. Hiuen-Tsang noticed that in South Kośala towns and villages were situated close together in the Śarabhapurīyan charters we come across such town as Śarabhapura, Śrīpura and Prasannapura. The close location of towns and villages as observed by the Chinese pilgrim indicates that there was a coordination and simultaneous development of the rural and the urban economy of the country. The large number of gold coins of the Śarabhapurīyas indicate that they were used for greater transactions in trade and commerce, and probably couries were also used in the day to day life of the people. Thus the territory of South Kośala under the iron rule of the Śarabhapurīyas with its rich forest resources and fertile soil prospered equally in agriculture and industry and the gold coins of Prasannamātra found scattered in different parts of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa indicate that the Śarabhapurīya monarchs had succeeded in maintaining a high standard of economy for more than a century.

Chapter Twelve

TRADE AND COMMERCE OF ŚARABHAPURA

The kingdom of Śarabhapura with its rich forest wealth, fertile soil and navigable rivers had all the potentialities for the development of trade and commerce. Being contiguous to Kalinga and Kongoda which were famous for sea-borne trade the country of Śarabhapura almost identical with South Kośala, had the avenue to maintain commercial link with the foreign countries through Palaura and Chelitālo which were famous ports of South Eastern India in the sixth and seventh centuries of the Christian era. The Mahanadi with its tributaries not only contributed to the agrarian prosperity of South Kośala but also provided good means of communication enabling the traders of the country to reach the ports of Kalinga, Kongoda and Utkala through the navigable streams. Ptolemy refers to Samalaka located on the bank of Mannad which is usually identified with Mahanadi.[1] This reference to Mannad by Ptolemy, the illustrious Greek Geographer, indicates the commercial importance of the river flowing through the central part of Kośala and Utkala. Being located on the valley of the Vindhyan ranges which divide India into two halves, it is the meeting ground of the people of the Northern and Southern India.

From the epic age the country Kośala was on the highway that proceeded from the north to the south. It is known from the Vana Parva of Mahābhārata that Kośala and Vidarbha were contiguous territories connected by broad highways[2] which facilitated commercial transactions between the two countries. The territory of Kośala provided another important route to the conquerors and the traders as well from Pāṭalīputra to Pisthapura. This is known to us from the Allahabad Pillar Inscription which reveals that the military forces of Samudragupta in course of their march from the capital city of Pāṭalīputra had to fight against the kings of Kośala in the very

1 Sambalpur District Gazetteer, 1968 (ed), p. 3.

2 Vide Chapter Two of the present work.

beginning of the South Indian Campaign. Harisena informs us that the Gupta emperor marched from Kośala to Piṣṭhapura through Mahākāntāra, Kurala and Kuṭṭura. By the middle of the fourth century A.D. the country of Kośala was connected by a net work of highways with Pāṭalīputra, Vidarbha, Āndhra, Kalinga, Kongoda and Utkala. It is also borne out in the Aihole cave inscription[1] that the South Indian conquerors and traders had to travel the same path from Piṣṭhapura to Kośala. Ravikīrti informs us that Pulakeśin II crushed the impregnable fort of Piṣṭhapura and entered into the kingdom of Kośala after vanquishing Kalinga. These military marches of Samudragupta and Pulakeśin II through Kośala clearly indicate that the kingdom of Śarabhapura comprised a considerable portion of South Kośala and occupied a place of great importance in the trade and commerce of India, particularly in the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. Such was the importance of the highway between Kalinga and Kośala that Hiuen-Tsang had to cover that traditional route after his tour of Utkala, Kongoda and Kalinga. The pilgrim proceeded from the capital of Kalinga at Mukhalingam, near Paralakhemundi and having covered a distance of 1800 li reached the capital of Kośala located in the Mārāguḍā valley, which was then the metropolitan city of the Śarabhapurīyas. Dr. Dubreuil[2] on the basis of epigraphic and literary evidences gives us a list of the following five roads which started from Vengi :

1 Road to Kalinga
2 Road to Drāviḍa
3 Road to Karnāṭaka
4 Road to Mahārashtra
5 Road to Kośala

We further learn from the Siyuki that Hiuen-Tsang having completed his four in South Kośala proceeded towards the South and covering a distance of about 900 li came to the Āndhra country.[2] These sources indicate that the Kingdom of Śarabhapura, referred to as South Kośala by the Chinese pilgrim, was linked with Pāṭalīputra, Vidarbha, Āndhra, Kalinga, Kongoda and Utkala by highway of commercial importance.

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1 EI, VI, pp. 6-11.

2 Beal, S., Chinese Accounts of India (1958), Vol. IV, p. 420.

A prosperous country like Śarabhapura linked with several neighbouring countries by highways naturally utilised its potentialities in trade and commerce. In the Śarabhapurīya charters the subjects have been issued royal orders for contributing Bhāga, Bhoga, Dhānya and Hiraṇya. The monarchs themselves were accustomed to donate wealth, land and cows to deserving Brāhmaṇas (Vasu Vasudhā go prada). The imprecatory verses of the charters also indicate that the country was abounding in cows (Gāvah) and gold (Suvarṇa) and that fertile land was worshipped as Bhūdevī or Śrī or Lakshmī, the consort of Viṣnu (Bhu-Vaishnavī). Cattle wealth of the country has also been indicated in the charters in various contexts. The references to Dhānya and Hiraṇya as taxes and Bhū and Suvarṇa as gifts give us the clue that the commercial prosperity of the country was due to its rich agricultural products and mineral wealth.

Opulence of South Kośala is indicated by the availability of excellent diamonds in the country. The diamonds of South Kośala were so famous that their significance has been cited by Kautilya[1] as 'Madhyamarāshṭraka'. The commentators of Arthaśāstra hold the view that those diamonds were produced in the Kośala[2] country. They further point out that Kośala and Vidarbha are the places where diamond mines[3] were situated. These informations given by Kautilya clearly reveal that South Kośala had attained celebrity as an opulent country due to her deposits of a special class of diamonds referred to in Arthaśāstra as those of the colour of the flower of 'Śirisha'. That these special class of diamond, called 'Śirishakusumopama', were found in the mines of South Kośala is clearly recorded by Varāha Mihira in his Brihat Samhitā.[4] The testimony of Varāha Mihira reveals that by the sixth century A.D., when the Brihat Samhitā was composed, South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas was well known in the all India market as the land of a special class of diamonds.

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1 Shamasastry, R. (Tr.), K.A. (Fifth edition), 1956, p. 78.
2 Ibid, Foot Note 9.
3 Ibid, Foot Note 12.
4 Brihat Samhitā, VIII, 32.

The grand road which connected Pāṭalīputra with Kośala must have resulted in rich commercial transactions pertaining to diamond. The Śarabhapurīya monarch, obviously, monopolised the diamond mines and granted lease to the rich merchants or 'Sārthavāhas' who must have kept commercial association with the various guilds of the Gupta empire in early part of the sixth century A.D. Gibbon on the authority of classical historians observes that the diamonds of Summelpore[1] were considered to be prized gems in ancient Rome. That Indians during the Gupta period had commercial contact with Rome is also proved by the finds of the gold coins of the Roman emperors in the east coast of India.[1]

We are thus disposed to believe that at least from the fourth century B.C. South Kośala attained fame for its special type of diamonds, which were probably carried to the Roman world through the outlets of the Gupta empire. Rich merchants of the kingdom of Śarabhapura, obviously, carried on internal trade in diamond with resourceful business magnets of the southern and the northern India. Like the Pushyamitras who were famous for their rich treasury the Śarabhapurīyas were in possession of 'Nidhi' and the 'Upanidhi'.[2] These terms refer to the various types of deposits of wealth which were found burried underground, as indicated in the Śarabhapurīya charters. There is no doubt that the Śarabhapurīyas were the owners of rich deposits of diamond and gold, for which the country prospered through inland and foreign trade.

Discovery of hoards of gold coins of Prasannamātra is a clear proof of active trade and commerce through the medium of money. The gold coins were certainly the medium in higher transactions like purchase and sale of precious gems. Discovery of gold coins of Prasannamātra in the Cuttack[3] district Orissa is an evidence of commercial contact of Kośala with the coastal districts of Utkala. Hiuen-Tsang[4] records that the country of Kongoda bordering on

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1 Gibbon, E., The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

2 See line 8 of Khariar Charter of Sudevarāja I (EI, IX, p. 170). 'Nidhi' means wealth and 'Upanidhi' is a deposit.

3 ASI-AR (1926-27), p. 230.

4 Travels of Hiouen-Thsang (S. Beal), Vol. IV (1958), p. 412,

the sea was abounding in many rare and valuable articles. It is quite probable that the Chinese pilgrim saw or heard about the special type of diamonds of South Kośala near the ports on the seashores of Kongoda before the ships sailed for foreign countries.

Another resource which must have contributed richly to the development of inland trade of Śarabhapura was the forest wealth. Hiuen Tsang records that the frontiers of South Kośala consisted of encircling mountain crags and that forests and jungles were found together in succession. It is very likely that the forests utilised by contractors for trade in timber, which was an essential commodity for everybody in the country. Another important power derived from the forests was elephantry. In the dense forests of Kalinga and Kośala there were mighty elephants, which find mention in literature. Harshavardhan refers to the elephants of Kośala in his drama Ratnavālī.[1] Elephants of Kalahandi district of Orissa are even now well known. These elephants were not only used for military forces but also for long journeys in inland trade. Elephant tusk was considered to be very valuable and it was prized as a luxurious article by rich persons of the country.

The Vaiśyas of South Kośala were the people whose profession was trade. Burhikhar copper plate grant[2] reveals that a Vaiśya called Bota was a resourceful merchant of South Kośala who sold the village Sangama to king Surabala of Mekala. This instance reveals that in the seventh century A.D. the Vaiśyas of South Kośala had the status of land owning aristocrats and they must have been powerful due to their economic associations and commercial organisations. Svarṇakāra Achala Simha[3] mentioned in the charter of Jayarāja of the Vaiśya caste must be a resourceful person engaged in the trade of gold and other precious articles. Like Achala Simha, Śrī Datta, Jyeṣṭtha Simha and Gola Simha were some of the distinguished persons of the Vaiśya community who traded in gold,

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1 Harsha, Ratnāvalī, see Chapter Seven of the present work.

2 Studies in Epigraphy, III, pp. 183-93.

3 JESI, IV, pp. 70-75.

copper and other valuable goods.[1] Svarṇakāra Achala Simha seems to have been connected with the royal mint for the preparation of gold coins.

The use of coins indicates that the people of South Kośala knew the system of weights and measures. We learn from Kautilyas' Arthaśāstra[2] that 5 seeds or 'gunja' were equivalent to 'Suvarṇa-mashā', 16 suvarṇamashās were equivalent to one suvarṇa or karsha. Probably 'Suvarṇakāra' Achala Simha of the Amgura plates was a specialist in the production of such types of gold coins or Suvarṇas. We further learn from Arthaśāstra that 88 white mustard seeds were equivalent to 1 silver mashā, 16 silver mashās were equivalent to 1 'dharaṇa' and 20 grains of rice were equivalent to 1 dharaṇa of a diamond in weight. Kāmaṇḍaka Nītisara which was a recognised Text of the Gupta period followed the basic tenets of Kautilya and, therefore, it is very probable that the above system of weights, prescribed in Arthaśāstra, were used in the kingdom of Śarabhapura in the purchase and sale of goods in terms of gold coins and diamond.

In spite of the prevalence of monetary exchange common people seemed to have taken resort to barter exchange in their day to day living. During the Śarabhapurīya rule only Mahendrāditya and Prasannamātra issued large number of gold coins which must have been used only in rich transactions. It seems that a considerable section of the society depending mainly on agriculture depended on the barter system for purchase and sale. Probably they took resort of 'Dhānya' or rice[3] as their unit of exchange in a good number of cases.

Commercial activities of the country used to thrive due to transport of goods to neighhouring countries. The most popular and common vehicle used by traders was bullock-cart. In early Buddhist literature[4] we come across the use of 500 carts used by the traders of Utkala for the transportation of paddy from Orissa to the western countries of India. In the Śarabhapurīya charters we get references

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1 Śrīdatta, Jyeṣṭha Simha and Golasimha were the engravers of the charter of Narendra, Vyāghrarāja and Pravararāja respectively.

2 Shamasastry, R.K.A (Fifth Edition, 1956), Chapter Nineteen, p. 113.

3 Such a practice is prevalent in Orissa even now among people who are dependent on agriculture.

4 Sahu, N. K., Buddhism in Orissa (1958), p. 9.

of use of Cows and Oxen,[1] for which kings used to donate the same in large numbers. Amarakosha[2] and Brihat Saṃhitā[3] which were composed in the time of Śarabhapurīyas, also indicate that Oxen were often used for purposes of trade and transport.

Riverine traffic must have been carried along the Mahānadi which connected business centres of South Kośala with the flourishing towns of Utkal and trading stations and ports like Chelitālo on the sea-shore in the east coast. The merchants of Kośala who took resort to riverine traffic across the Mahānadī carried their goods on the spacious boats particularly when the rivers were suitable for navigation. Riverine trade of South Kośala, obviously, contributed to the rise of several prosperous towns and business centres in the country in the Śarabhapurīyan period and in the periods which followed that epoch. Mallālapaṭṭana (modern Malhar and Arang, where we have got several charters of the Śarabhapurīyas, situated on the bank of Mahānadi and those places flourished even in the post-Śarabhapurīya period due to the increasing trading activities of the merchants. Sambalpur referred to as samalaka on the Mannad (Mohanadi) by Ptolemy, (Dharmanagara) Dhamma[4] (Suvarṇapura) Modern Sonepur, Jajātinagara (Modern Jagati) were some of the leading townships which flourished even before and after the rise of the Śarabhapurīyas due to the development of riverine trade across the Mahānadī.

Along the highways and the riverine routes bullock carts and boats were the common and popular means of transportation. But the country of South Kośala being surrounded and filled with several hillocks, mountains and dense forests necessitated the transport of goods on the back of elephants and other animals across the valleys of the country. Hiuen-Tsang records that the elephants of Kalinga were much prized by neighbouring provinces.[5] Although elephants

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1 Vide line 3 of the copper plate charters of Jayarāja, Sudevarāja and Pravararāja.

2 Amara, IX, pp. 65-66.

3 Brihat Saṃhitā, LXI, 14.

4 Vide the University Museum plate of Janmejaya.

5 Kautilya an earlier authority also records, 'breading countries' such as Kalinga, Anga, Karusa and the east are fest, [Samasastri, R. K. A. (1956)], p. 49.

flourished in the forest region of Kośala they were probably of the middle quality.[1] Therefore, the monarchs and resourceful merchants of South Kośala, as hinted by Hiuen-Tsang, prized the elephants of Kalinga and purchased them for their trade and transport across the mountainous routes in the hilly kingdom of Śarabhapura.

The aforesaid analysis gives us a picture of the economic condition of the kingdom of Śarabhapura which made rapid strides due to her trading activities and commercial transactions in neighbouring countries like Vidarbha, Kalinga, Kangoḍa, Utkala and Āndhra. The merchants carried caravans on the back of elephants along the hilly tracts. Some of them took resort to riverine trade and transported common goods as well as valuable articles on the boats across the Mahānadi and others of the business communities transported paddy and other consumer's goods through bullock-carts on the regular roads which connected Kośala with neighbouring countries. South Kośala being a repository of diamond mines attained celebrity in the commercial world across the high seas and circumstantial evidences given by Varāhamihira and Hiuen-Tsang indicate that the economic prosperity and trading activities of South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas depended on the fertility of the soil and her mineral wealth.

1 Ibid.

Chapter Thirteen

THE COINAGE OF THE ŚARABHAPURĪYAS

In the sphere of Indian numismatics of the sixth century A.D. the coinage of the Śarabhapurīyas occupies a place of regional importance. It not only throws definite light on the genealogy of the Śarabhapurīyas but also helps us to study the cultural and economic condition of South Kośala in the period under review. The strong Gupta influence over the same with its emblems of Śaṅkha, Chakra and Garuḍa is a positive proof of the expansion of Gupta culture over the length and breadth of the territory of Śarabhapura.

The Nalas who ruled over South Kośala in the pre-Śarabhapurīya period, had also minted gold coins which have been found at Edenga[1] in the Bastar district and at Kulia[2] in the Durg district of Madhya Pradesh. Varāharāja, Bhavadatta and Arthapati of the Nala family issued the same and all of them were Śaivites, as indicated by the emblem of bull on their coins. In the fifth century A.D. they started a process of minting which was followed by Mahendrāditya and Prasannamātra in the succeeding century. Average weight of their coins was about $1\frac{1}{2}$ grams. On the obverse of their coins they depicted a circle of dots on the circumference and divided the coins into two halves by a horizontal line. In the upper half of the same there is depiction of a couchant humped bull facing right with crescent moon behind it and in the lower half there is the legend, recording the name of the ruler who circulated the coins. Reverse of the Nala coins is always blank. Average length of the diametre of the coins is about 20 mm. The Nalas who had inflicted defeat on the Vākāṭakas and spread their suzerain influence as far as Prayāga, circulated these gold coins in South Kośala in the fifth century A.D.

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1 JNSI, I, p. 31 ff.

2 Prāchya Pratībhā, Vol. V, No. 1, Jan. 1977, four more gold coins of the Nalas are deposited in the Lucknow Museum, (N. S., XLIV, p. 12 ; JNSI, XXXIII, p. 115 ff.).

The rise of the Śarabhapurīyas towards the close of the fifth century A.D. is a landmark in the history of South Koṡala. Mahārāja Narendra, the second ruler of the dynasty, who is known to us from his Pipardula,[1] Kurud[2] and Rawan[3] copper plates, expanded the territory of Śarabhapura. But he is not known to have minted coins in his own name. His Kurud plates indicate that he was still owing nominal allegiance to the Gupta overlord (Parama Bhaṭṭāraka). Śarabhapurīya charters reveal that Prasanna, father of Jayarāja alias Mānamātra, was the next great ruler of the family. But the relation between Narendra and Prasanna is not known. Apparently there is a gap in the genealogy between Narendra and Prasanna. In our opinion this gap may be filled by the information derived from numismatic sources. As we have indicated in Chapter V of this work, a good number of gold coins bearing the name of Mahendrāditya has been found in different parts of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. We are inclined to believe that Mahendra or Mahendrāditya was in all probability a successor of Narendra. Till today the following gold coins of Mahendrāditya have been found :

(a) One coin preserved in Lucknow Museum[4]. Its findspot is not known.

(b) Fiftyfour coins from Khairtal in Raipur district of Madhya Pradesh.[5]

(c) One coin of Mahendrāditya found in Madanpur-Rampur in the Kalahandi district of Orissa.[6]

(d) Twentyfive coins from Kulia[7] in the Durg district of Madhya Pradesh.

(e) Fortysix coins from Pitaibandh in the Raipur district.[8]

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1 IHQ, XIX, p. 131 ff.
2 EI, XXXI, pp. 263-66 ; EI, XXXI, pp. 267-68.
3 JESI, VI, pp. 44-45.
4 NS, XLIV, No. 309.
5 JNSI, X, p. 137.
6 OHRJ, F, p. 137.
7 Prāchya Pratībhā (January 1977), pp. 69-74.
8 JNSI, XXII, p. 184.

(f) Two unpublished coins with Mr. Soni of Raipur.[1]
(g) One coin from Bhandara in the Chanda district.[2]

Thus altogether 130 gold coins of Mahendrāditya have been found in the region of South Kośala. On the obverse of these coins inside the circle of dots along the edge there is the figure of Garuḍa standing on a horizontal line with wings spread out, to its upper right are the crescent moon with a round dot above and a wheel (Chakra) encircled by dots; and to its proper left are the so called sun symbol and a Counch (Śaṅkha) with its opening to the right. Below the horizontal line is the legend "Śri Mahendrāditya" in the boxhead variety of the Brāhmi script of the southern class. Below the letter 'ma' of the legend is the letter 'sa', below the letter 'he' of the legend there is depiction of a cluster of seven dots. Diametre of these coins is .74" long and the average weight is 17.3 grains. In Khairtal hoard, however, measurement of the coins varies from .78" to .87" in diametre and the weight also varies from 19 grains to 20.2 grains.

Scholars have been divided in opinion with regard to the identification of Mahendrāditya of these coins. Rai Bahadur Prayag Dayal[3] attributed these coins to Kumāragupta I while editing the Khairtal hoard of coins V. P. Rode[4] held the view that the coins of Mahendrāditya belonged to two series, one series issued by Kumāragupta I and the other by Pāṇḍuvaṃśī king Tivaradeva and his successors. V. V. Mirashi[5] does not accept the theory of Rode. He is of opinion that the coins of Mahendrāditya were issued by the kings of the Rājarshitūlya kula in the name of Kumāragupta I. When B. C. Jain[6] edited the Bhandara hoard of coins he held that the coins of Mahendrāditya were possibly minted by local rulers. But while editing the Pitaiband hoard of coins he revised his opinion[7] and attributed the coins of Mahendrāditya to Kumāragupta I. Ajit Ghose,[8] however, assigns these

1 Prāchya Pratībhā, Vol. V, No. 1, p. 70.
2 JNSI, XVI, Vol. V, pp. 215-221.
3 NS, XLIV, p. 11.
4 JNSI, X, p. 138.
5 JNSI, XI, p. 109.
6 JNS, XVI, p. 218.
7 JNS, 1, XXII, p. 184.
8 NS, XLVI, pp. 21-22.

coins to some later kings of the sixth or the seventh century A.D. P. L. Mishra[1] think that Mahendrāditya was identical with Mahendra of the Prayāga Praśasti who in his opinion belonged to the Nala family. A. S. Altekar[2] is not inclined to accept the view that the coins were issued by Kumāragupta I. Such thin gold coins with blank reverse were not common to Gupta coinage. Similar types of pieces were circulated by the Nalas in the fifth century and by Prasannamātra of the Śarabhapurīya family in the sixth century A.D. in South Kośala. No gold coin of Kumāragupta I is less than 120 grains in weight. But the coins of Mahendrāditya weigh only about 20 grains. The reverse of the gold coins of Kumāragupta I is never left blank. But the coins of Mahendrāditya are raised in relief by the device of Hammering the designs of letters and emblems from the backside so that the reverse in these varieties is always blank. Such varieties of coins are found only in South Kośala and no where else throughout the vast Gupta empire. There is no doubt, therefore, that these coins had nothing to do with Kumāragupta I and that they were issued by some local ruler of South Kośala.

A close and comparative study of the coins of the Nalas, Mahendrāditya and Prasannamātra reveals that all of them were struck by the same device and in the same design. The only difference between the coins of the Nalas and those of Mahendrāditya and Prasannamātra is that while Bull is embossed on the obverse of the Nala coins[3] Garuḍa, flanked by counch and wheel, features on the coins of Mahendrāditya and Prasannamātra. Varāharāja, Bhavadatta and Arthapati were Śaivite rulers who embossed the emblem of bull and crescent on their coins. But Mahendrāditya and Prasannamātra were Vaiṣṇavite rulers who embossed the emblems of Garuḍa, Śaṅkha and Chakra on their coins. Mahendrāditya and Prasannamātra, however, retained the emblem of crescent, probably as a relic of the Nalas, in their own coins.

The similarity in the coins of Mahendrāditya and Prasannamātra leads us to hold the view that Mahendrāditya of the coins was a

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1 IHQ, XXXVII, p. 2 ; Ibid, pp. 247-59.

2 JNSI, X, p. 139.

3 Prāchya Pratibhā (1977), Vol. V, No. 1.

Śarabhapurīya ruler who was a predecessor (probably father), of Prasannamātra. In fact there is a gap in the Śarabhapurīya genealogy between Narendra and Prasannamātra. The coins of Mahendrāditya help us to bridge this gap by maintaining our hypothesis that Mahendrāditya whose short name was probably Mahendra, was a successor of Narendra and predecessor of Prasannamātra. The coins of Mahendrāditya are engraved in box-head characters which were used by the kings of the Śarabhapurīya family in the sixth century A.D. The coins of Prasannamātra of the Bhandara hoard weigh from 16.7 grains to 16.9 grains and the Mahendrāditya coin of the same hoard weighs 17.3 grains. Coins of Prasannamātra of Bhandara hoard have a diametre of .71″ or .72″ and the diametre of the Mahendrāditya coin is .74″. Thus in size and weight also the coins of Mahendrāditya are almost equal to those of Prasannamātra. It is further striking to note that the cluster of dots on both the types of coins is same in number and placement. It is evident that Mahendrāditya coins are Śarabhapurīya coins and that Mahendrāditya was a predecessor of Prasannamātra. There is no doubt, that Prasannamātra closely followed the coins of Mahendrāditya which also appear to have been current in the kingdom of Śarabhapura even in the time of Prasannamātra. It is no wonder that at various findspots coins of Prasannamātra and those of Mahendrāditya have been found together. In the light of our above argument we are not inclined to identify Mahendrāditya of the gold coins of south Koṡala with Kumāragupta I whose rule over south Koṡala is not substantiated by any other evidence. A large number of cointypes of Kumāragupta I have been found in the Bayana hoard but not a single coin of the type of Mahendrāditya is found there. Gupta gold coins were never local. Therefore, it is without doubt that Mahendrāditya of the gold coins of south Koṡala was not the same as Kumāragupta I but a ruler of the Śarabhapurīya line in close proximity to Prasannamātra in the chronology of the family.[1] Rise of Mahendrāditya seems to have brought about a period of boon in the economic history of South Koṡala. Mahārāja Narendra's policy of

1 Nishar Ahmad (JNSI, XXVI, p. 31) refutes the theory that Mahendrāditya coins were issued by Kumāragupta I. But he joins with B. P. Sinha and

territorial expansion was followed by a period of economic prosperity indicated by the gold coins of Mahendrāditya. This period of boon in the economic history of Śarabhapura reached its zenith in the time of Prasannamātra who is referred to simply as Prasanna in the seals of the Śarabhapurīya charters. Till today Prasannamātra is known to have circulated the following list of gold coins :

(a) To coins published by Sri L. P. Pandey.[1]
(b) Two coins in possession of Sri S. K. Saraswati.[2]
(c) Six coins preserved in the coin cabinet of Nagpur Museum.[3]
(d) Fortyseven coins found in a hoard in a village called Berhampur in the Cuttack district of Orissa.[4]
(e) Eleven coins discensed in 1947 at Bhandara in the Chanda district.[5]
(f) One broken bit of gold coin excavated from the layer at Sirpur in 1957.[6]
(g) One from Mahasamund in the Raipur district.[7]
(h) Six coins in the possession of Sri Jitamitra Prasad Singh Deo of Khariar, Orissa, found at Nehena.[8]
(i) One coin found at Nehena preserved in the Orissa State Museum at Bhubaneswar.[9]
(j) We have collected four coins from Nehena and they are now preserved in the Sambalpur University Museum.[10]

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identifies Mahendrāditya of Kathāsaritasāgara. We are not in a position to accept this identification as Kathāsaritasāgara is a literary work of the eleventh century A.D. and its legendary character Mahendrāditya of Ujjayinī need not be identified with Mahendrāditya of South Kośala.

1 Proceedings of 5th Oriented Conference, Lahore, p. 461 ; IHQ, IX, p. 595.
2 The Vākātaka Gupta Age, p. 57.
3 JNSI, XII, p. 8.
4 Arch. Survery of India (1926-27), p. 230.
5 JNSI, XVI, Part II, p. 215.
6 Jain B. C., Utkirnleke, Raipur, Part VI.
7 Prāchya Pratibhā (1977), V, No. 1, pp. 69-74.
8 NAHO, II, pp. 26-30.
9 The coin is presented to the State Museum Orissa by J. P. Singh Deo.
10 See above.

The four coins discovered by us are described below :

Sl. No.	*Weight*	*Sp. gr.*	*Percentage of pure gold*
1.	1.360 grams =10.7 Ratis	14.6 gr.	75.6
2.	1.330 grams =10.95 Ratis	14.7 gr.	76.12
3.	1.312 grams =10.8 Ratis	13.6 gr.	70.42
4.	1.360 grams =11.2 Ratis	14.4 gr.	74.7

These four coins broadly tally with the coins of Prasannamātra so far known to us. These are repousse coins, reverse of the same being left blank. On the obverse of the coins a horizonal coins divides the coins in the two halves. On the upper half of the coins there is the figure of Garuḍa with its outspread wings, counch to its left and wheel to its right, below the horizontal line we find the legend "Śri Prasannamātra" in the box-head characters of the sixth century A.D. Below the letter "sa" there is the representation of "Purṇaghaṭa", covered probably by a cocoanut. To the upper right of the Garuḍa there is the emblem of crescent moon. To the upper left of the Garuḍa there is the representation of the so called Sun symbol.

In the variety 'B' of the coins, as classified by B. C. Jain,[1] below the letter 'sa' of the legend we notice a cluster of six dots. But in our present coins discovered from Nehena near Khariar there is only "Purṇaghaṭa" below the letter 'sa'. Those six dots are found above the horizontal line on the two sides of the figure of Garuḍa. The dots on the coins appear to be the marks impressed on the coins to indicate the definite denomination.

The gold coins of the Archer type of Samudragupta usually weighed from 7.120 grams to 7.776 grams.[2] The gold coins of Kumāragupta I weighed from about 120 to 126 grams.[3] But the

1 JNSI, XXII, p. 184 ff.

2 Altekar, A. S., The Coinage of the Gupta Empire, (NSI).

3 Ibid.

coins of the Nalas and the Śarabhapuriyas never weighed more than 12 or 13 Ratis. In the Khariar hoard the weight of the gold coins of Prasannamātra varied only from 1.30 grams (=10.7 Ratis) to 1.360 grams (=11.2 Ratis). According to Manu[1] 5 Krishnālas or Ratis=1 mashā and 16 mashās=1 suvarṇa. As per this table a gold coin of the weight of 2 mashās or 10 Krishnālas or ratis was one-eighth of a 'Suvarṇa', which was equivalent to 80 ratis. In other texts[2] it is held that a Śatamāṇa weighed 100 ratis and Pādārdha=Śatamāṇa or one-eighth of a Śatamāṇa weighed 12½ Ratis. In our Khariar hoard weight of the gold coins ranged from 10.7 Ratis to 11.2 Ratis. In the inscriptions of Orissa we find reference to Svarṇa and Mādha (or Mashā). Therefore, it is very prabable that the gold coin of Prasannamātra of the weight of 10.7 Ratis=2 Mashās was one-eighth of a Suvarṇa. But if we presume that there might be loss of weight in the coins through centuries of erosion we may believe that the average weight of the gold coins of Prasannamātra was 12½ Ratis i.e., one-eighth of a Śatamāṇa, Sl. No. 4 of our present hoard of Khariar indicates a weight of 11.2 Ratis. If we apply the standard of Pādārdha Śatamāṇa we have to say that there is a loss of 1.3 Ratis in the said denomination of gold coins. In the light of our aforesaid observation we think that either 1/8 of Suvarṇa or 1/8 of Śatamāṇa called Pādārdha Śatamāṇa was the standard gold coins which was used in the Kingdom of Śarabhapura for all higher transactions. Considered from the point of Gupta standard the percentage of gold of the Śarabhapurīya coins semes to be of an accepted standard. As we have shown above the percentage of gold in the Khariar hoard varied from 70.42 to 76.12. Some of the gold coins of Samudragupta also show the percentage of purity in this range. In British Museum Catalogue No. 32 of the Battle axe type[3] coin of Samudragupta, for example, shows 72.5 percent of pure gold. The gold coins of Prasannamātra are found scattered in various parts of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Berhampur in the Cuttack district, Nehena in the Kalahandi district, Bhandara in the Chanda district

1 Maity, S. K., Early Indian Coins and Currency System, p. 37.
2 Ibid, p. 21.
3 Ibid, pp. 84-85.

mark the provenance of the gold coins of Prasannamātra. At one time Sri L. P. Pandey held the view that the two coins of Prasannamātra discovered by the Mahakośala Historical Society were of silver. But recently A. M. Sastri[1] has rightly pointed out that those coins were highly debased with more percentage of silver but not of silver alone. In fact all the known coins of Prasannamātra were of gold and not of silver, although some of his coins were highly debased.

The coins of Mahendrāditya and Prasannamātra not only indicate the high economic standard of the kingdom of Śarabhapura, the find spot of these coins in the district of Cuttack also reveals that in course of trade the merchants of South Kośala carried those coins to the coastal tract of Utkala. The representation of Garuḍa, Śaṅkha and Chakra on them also reveals that the Śarabhapurīya kings like most of the great Gupta kings embraced Vaishnavism, probably under the influence of the teachers of the Pancharātra school. Thus the Śarabhapurīyan coins throw light on the economic condition, range of political supremacy and the religious faith of the royal house of South Kośala in the sixth century of the Christian era.

1 **Prāchya Pratībhā (1977), Vol. V, No. 1, p. 34.**

Chapter Fourteen

RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF ŚARABHAPURA

Religions condition of Kalinga and Kośala in Pre-Śarabhapurīya period

The triumph of Vaishnavism in South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas was preceded by a long period of struggle for its survival. Samudragupta's invasion of Kośala in the middle of the fourth century A.D. led to a cultural upheaval resulting in the rise of Vaishnavism in the conquered territories. Vaishnavism was, however, not unknown to Kośala. An inscribed image of Viṣnu from Burhikhar, near Malhar, has been assigned to the second century B.C.[1] In fact, the earliest epigraphic evidence for the rise of Bhāgavata cult is to be noticed in Madhya Pradesh. Garuḍa pillar inscription of Besnagar which reveals the conversion of Heliodorous into a cult of Bhāgavata bears testimony to the fact.[2] With the rise of the Guptas and the Vākāṭakas the Chhattisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh which was the heart of south Kośala for a considerable period, came under their cultural influence. The Guptas as well as Vākāṭakas are known to have exerted their political sway over South Kośala till the rise of the Śarabhapurīyas. They were the great champions of the Pancharātra and the Bhāgavata cults must have contributed to the development of Vaishnavism in South Kośala in the fourth and fifth century A.D. Sometimes after Samudragupta's invasion there emerged the powerful Nalas who ruled over South Kośala in the fifth century A.D. For some time under Bhavadattavarman the Nalas were champions of Śaivism and the cult of Skanda-Kārttikeya.[3] But under Skandavarman they cham-

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1 Vide Bajpai, K. D., Pandey, S. K., Malhar (1978), Bajpai and Pandey ascribe the image to 2nd century B.C.; Jaiswal, S., Origin and Development of Vaishnavism (1967), p. 172 (Jaiswal places it in the 1st century B.C.).

2 Sircar, D. C., Sel. Ins. (1942), pp. 90-91.

3 The territory of Skandavarman was dedicated to Maheśvara and Mahāsena vide Rajguru, S. N., IO, Vol. I.

pioned the cause of Vaishnavism. We learn from the Podagarh stone inscription[1] that Skandavarman set up the foot prints of Viṣnu and the same inscription refers to the general of Skandavarman as Prithibhāgavata. According to verse 9 of the same inscription he who will confirm to the good paths followed by kings will for long, find refuge in (God) Vāsudeva. The inscription indicates that Viṣnu and Vāsudeva were considered to be identical in Kośala in Pre-Śarabhapurīya period while the Nalas patronised the Bhāgavata cult centering Vāsudeva, the Māṭharas in Kalinga embraced Vaishnavism and championed the Pancharātra school centering the deity Nārāyaṇa. Anantashaktivarman of the Māṭhara family of Kalinga was a devotee of Nārāyaṇasvāmī and Prabhanjanavarman of the same family also describes himself as devout worshipper at the feet of Lord Nārāyaṇa (Bhāgavatsvāmī Nārāyaṇa Pādānudhyāta).[2] Nandaprabhanjanavarman and Chandavarman who ruled over Kalinga during this period referred to themselves as parama bhāgavata. In the Barang copper plate[3] of Nandaprabhanjanavarman the writer is called Krishna Chandra and the writer of Tekkali plates of Umavarman was Keshavadeva.[4] These inscriptional references indicate that in Kalinga under the Māṭharas Krishnachandra and Keshava had become very popular names thereby indicating the popularity of Bhāgavata cult centering round Krishna. It seems that in Kalinga during this period Krishna and Nārāyaṇa were identical and there was in all probability a fusion of Pañcharātra and the Bhāgavata schools. Thus the growth of Vaishnavism in Kalinga and Kośala leading to the fusion of Pancharātra and Bhāgavata Schools prepared the foundation on which the Pancharātra cult flourished in the kingdom of Śarabhapura in the sixth and seventh century A.D. It is striking to note that in spite of the existence of Śaivism, Buddhism and Jainism in Kalinga and Kośala in Pre-Śarabhapurīya period, Vaishnavism was evolving as vibrant faith of the people in the fifth century A.D.

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1 EI, XXI, pp. 153-57.
2 EI, XXVIII, p. 175-79 ff.
3 OHRJ, VI, pp. 106-114.
4 JAHRS, VI, p. 53 ; EI, XXVIII, pp. 298-302.

Vaishnavism in Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas

The re-establishment of the Bhāgavata cult in South Kośala under the benevolent patronage of the Śarabhapurīyas is a land mark in the growth and development of Vaishnavism. The Śurbhapurīyas who hailed from a tribal stock of the Vindhyas were undergoing a process of social promotion when the Pancharātra cult brought a new message to their door steps. According to R. C. Majumdar,[1] 'the rise and spread of different sectarian religions notably Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishnavism and Saivism rapidly changed the whole outlook of India. In the Gupta period the princes and the people were chiefly biased towards Vaishnavism. The patronage of the Imperial Guptas had richly contributed to the ramifications of Vaishnavism in various parts of India. Prabhāvatī Guptā, daughter of Chandra Gupta II, is known to have been initiated by Chanālasvāmī,[2] an Āchārya of the Pancharātra school of the Vaishnavite order. It is well known to us from epigraphic sources that the successors of Prabhāvatī Guptā exercised sovereignty over South Kośala for some time. It is quite likely that during the period of Vākātaka suzerainty over South Kośala the Pancharātra teacher found an avenue to proceed to the Chhattisgarh region and popularised their cult. It is interesting to note that according to the Pancharātra system[3] a devotee at the time of initiation was to be branded with the emblems of Śaṅkha and Chakra. It was also customary on the part of kings and queens to donate land to Āchāryas on such occasions as Guru Dakshiṇā for the maintenance of monasteries. We venture to suggest that on one such occasion 'Śaṅkha Chakrabhoga' mentioned in the Mallar charter of Pravaravāja must have been so named in commemoration of an initiation ceremony accompanied by branding of the emblems of Śaṅkha and Chakra on the kings' body. Such a ceremony might have been followed by grant of land in a bhoga which was probably called Śaṅkha Chakrabhoga. This probable hypothesis leads us to believe that like Chanālasvāmīn who initiated the Vākātaka queen

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1 Majumdar, R. C. and Pushalkar, A. D., The Classical Age, p. 370.

2 Poona copper plate inscription of Prabhāvatī Guptā, Line 14, Sircar, D. C., Sel. Ins., p. 413.

3 Jaiswal, S., Origin and Development of Vaishnavism (1967), p. 143.

Prabhāvatīguptā, several Āchāryas of the Pancharātra school must have visited South Kośala which was under the Vākātkas for a considerable period. We further learn from the Kurud plates that the Guptas also exercised their sovereign influence for sometime over the Kośalan territory of Śarabhapura before the accession of Mahārāja Narendra. Thus, it is evident that under the patronage of the Guptas and the Vākātakas Vaiṣnavism gained a strong hold over South Kośala in the fifth century A.D.

Under such circumstances when the tribal Chief Śarabha asserted his supremacy and established a new kingdom, the Āchāryas of the Pancharātra school must have got hold of the tribal chief who was then forging ahead for his social promotion. During this process of transformation from tribalism to Āryānisation the teachers of the Pancharātra school provided a living faith to the royal house of Śarabhapura. They came forward to embrace the tribal people like Pulindas, Śabaras and Śarabhas who dwelt in the Vindhyan range. Bhāgavata Purāṇa[1] informs us that Kirātas, Huṇas, Pulindas, Abhiras and Yavanas were also purified by the worship of Viṣnu. This purānic reference clearly indicates that the teachers of the Pancharātra school gained hold even over the foreigners and tribal people of the forest regions. We know that Heliodorus, the Greek General, had embraced Vaishnavism by accepting Vāsudeva as the 'God of gods'. In the post-Gupta period the Huṇas, as V. A. Smith[2] rightly observes, 'yielded to the wonderful assimilative power of Hinduism and rapidly became Hinduised'. Several indigenous and aboriginal tribes underwent the same process. The Gonds, Bhars and Kharwars emerged as Chandelas, Rathors and Gaharwars.[3] Pulindas emerged as Śailajas or Śailodbhavas in Kongoda[4] and the Śarabhas or the Śarabhapurīyas as 'Amarāryas' in South Kośala. The Śarabhapurīyas of tribal origin underwent a process of Āryānisation and called themselves 'Amarāryas'[5] who were no other than scions of 'Amaraja'

1 Bhāgavata Purāṇa II, 4.18.
2 Smith, V. A., I. (1908), p. 303.
3 Ibid.
4 Behera, S. C., Śailodbhavas of Kongoda Mandala (Ph.D. Thesis), Ch. IV.
5 Vide Mallar plates of Vyāghrarāja ; EI, XXXIV, pp. 45-50.

family mentioned in the Bahamani plates of Bharatabala. They not only linked themselves with the Pāṇḍava kings of Mekala by bringing about the marriage of Lokaprakāsā with Bharatabala they also received a sort of spiritual sanction from the Āchāryas of the Pancharātra school who by branding them with the emblems of Śaṅkha and Chakra must have played a great role in entertaining them into the fold of Brāhmanical form of Hinduism. It is striking to note that all the donees of the Śarabhapurīyan charters have their names ending with 'Svāmīn' like Chanālasvāmīn of the Poona plates of Prabhāvatīguptā.[1] These Svāmins were very probably Vaiṣnavas of the Pancharātra school and among them we find such names as Vishnusvāmī[2] of Vājasaneya Charaṇa and Kausika gotra, Mādhava Chaturvedasvāmī,[3] Dikshīta Ananta Svāmī[4] of Vājasaneya Charaṇa and Bharadvāja gotra and Dāmodara Svāmī[5] of Bharadvāja gotra. Among these doneess, thus, we find the names of Lord Viṣnu like Viṣnu, Mādhava, Ananta and Dāmodara and they belonged to either Kausika or Bharadvāja gotra. It is revealing to note that according to Iśvara Samhitā,[6] Sauditya, Aupagayuna, Maunjayana, *Kausika* and *Bharadvāja* were the five sages who were first indoctrinated into the Pancharātra system in five successive days and nights. In the light of the Iśvara Samhitā it is amply indicated that Viṣnu Svāmī of Kausika gotra, Dikshita Ananta Svāmī and Dāmodara Svāmī of Bharadvāja gotra were certainly learned scholars of the Pancharātra school of Vaiṣnavism who were patronised by the Śarabhapurīyas.

All the rulers of the Śarabhapurīya family were devout worshippers of Viṣnu who declared themselves as 'Parama Bhāgavata' in their charters. Although they were the followers of the Pancharātra system they observed the Bhāgavata Cult which accepted Krishna-

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1 Sircar, D. C., Sel. Ins., p. 413 ff.

2 Vide Amgura plates of Jayarāja and Khariar plates of Sudevarāja I.

3 Vide Mahasamund plates of Sudevarāja I.

4 Vide Pokhara plate.

5 Vide Mallar plates of Pravararāja.

6 Iśvara Samhitā, XXI, 579, 532 quoted by B. Bhattacharya forwarded to Jayasamhita, p. 9.

Vāsudeva as the supreme deity. They did not call themselves 'Bhāgavatsvāmī Nārāyaṇa Pādabhakta' like the Māṭharas, nor did they call themselves 'Parama Vaiṣnava' like the early Pāṇḍuvamśīs. Like the Guptas they designated themselves as Parama Bhāgavatas. We presume that the new cult of Vaiṣnavism, which the Śarabhapurīyas embraced, synthesized the Pancharātra and the Bhāgavata schools admitting the non-Āryan tribes into its fold. This neo-Vaiṣnavism thus was a great movement which succeeded to a great extent in Āryānising the foreigners and the non-Āryan tribes of Southern India. The teachers of this movement accepted Kriṣhna-Vāsudeva to be identical with Nārāyaṇa-Vishnu and inspired the Śarabharurīyas to construct temples for the enshrinement of Vaishnavite deities.

Rawan plate[1] gives us an instance of such a Vaishnavite shrine, built and maintained by the Śarabhapurīya king. The charter reveals that Mahārāja Narendra had built a temple dedicated to Bhagavān Śrīdhara Svāmīn. The monarch is further known to have donated the village Ārāmaka of Manṭarāja Bhukti for the daily worship, offerings and oblations in the temple as well as for the repair of the shrine situated near Baṭapadraka.[2] The above quoted epigraphic evidence reveals that Vishnu was worshipped as Bhagavān Śrīdhara Svāmīn and that various rituals were observed in the temple dedicated to the deity at Baṭapadraka.

The epigraphic reference is also supported by the archaeological remains of the period. At Khariar we have noticed an interesting image of Viṣnu[3] (Figure 18) which on the ground of iconographic features may be assigned to the age of the Śarabhapurīyas. The image is found in the locality where two sets of copper plate grants of the Śarabhapurīyas were also recovered. We are of the opinion that the capital of the Śarabhapurīyas was located near Khariar in the Mārāguḍa valley where we notice some sculptures of the age of

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1 JESI (1979), VI, pp. 44-45.

2 Vatapadrakiya Karitaka Devakule Bhavate
Śrīdharasvāmīne Matri-Rājakūlanām
puṇyāvivṛddhaye Khaṇḍa sphutita samerkara bali-charu satra
Vide JESI, IV (1979), pp. 44-45.

3 For details of this icon see Chapter Fifteen.

the Śarabhapurīyas. The Viṣnu image of Khariar is four-armed. Śaṅkha and Chakra are clearly visible in the two upper arms while the two lower arms are broken. Nascent ornamentation, plain halo and simple tiara are of the features of this icon which are the characteristics of the images of the seventh century A.D. It is not wide of the mark to indicate this Viṣnu image as a production of the Śarabhapurīyan school.

In course of exploration the Department of Archaeology of the Government of Orissa has noticed in the Mārāguḍa valley a broken hand of a Viṣnu image associated with conch. It is difficult to fix the date of this archaeological object, although it is quite likely that it might be a part of a Viṣnu image of the Śarabhapurīya period.

The numismatic sources substantially prove that under the influence of the Guptas Vaiṣnavism flourished in South Kośala. The Gupta emblem of Garuḍa finds place in the gold coins of Mahendrāditya[1] along with the representation of Śaṅkha and Chakra. These coins are found in the Khairtal hoard and the legend on them is found embossed in box-head characters of South Kośala. The same emblems of Garuḍa, Śaṅkha and Chakra are found in all the coins of Prasannamātra.[2] There is no doubt that the king minting such coins was like his predecessors and successors, a devout worshipper of Vishnu. Although we have not secured a single charter of Prasannamātra till today, his coins meet this deficiency and clearly indicate that he was a great champion of Vaishnavism.

Cult of Gaja-Lakshmī

A study of the Śarabhapurīya charters reveals that in spite of the triumph of the vibrant faith of the Pancharātra cult, it was Śrī or Lakshmī who occupied the pivotal place in the religious life of the people and princes of South Kośala in the fifth and the sixth centuries A.D. She is represented conspicuously in all the seals attached to the Śarabhapurīya charters in the form of Gaja-Lakshmī (Figure 2). She is found standing on a full blown lotus with a plain halo round

1 Vide Chapter Twelve.

2 Rode, V. P., JNSI, XII, p. 9.

her head. Her left hand hangs in a comfortable posture while the right hand is found lifted in a Varadā pose. She appears to hold some indistinct objects in both the hands. She wears no ornaments, nor does she wear cornucopia. Perhaps she wears a thin Sārī and puts on a bodice on her breast. She is flanked by two elephants with their raised trunks approaching the head of the goddess in the posture of pouring water from a pot on her head.

In the midst of the ruins of Tālā we notice a panel of sculpture depicting Lakshmī seated on Padmāsana flanked by two elephants on her left and right sides (Figure 6). Dr. K. D. Bajpai has identified Sangama grāma of the Burhikhar grant of Surabala with Tālā and on stylistic ground the two temples popularly called Jethani and Devrani,[1] have been assigned to the Śarabhapurīyan period.

A study of the motif of Gaja Lakshmī depicted on the Śarabhapurīya seals and sculptures clearly indicates that Śrī or Lakshmī found the pre-eminent position in the royal house of Śarabhapura. A probe into the rise of this cult in South Kośala leads us to find that Śrī or Lakshmī was primarily the deity of fertility of the pre-Āryan origin.[2] Her names derived from Sanskrit roots appear to have been used after Āryānisation. In Śrīsukta She is described as exulting at the sound of elephants (Hastināḍaprobodhinī). Dr. Suvira Jaiswal thinks that her association with 'Hastī' was in reality her association with 'Nāga', which means both elephant and cobra. She holds the view that the Nāgas were the aboriginal tribes who worshipped the goddess of fertility, later on Āryanised and named as Śrī or Lakshmī. In this background following the view point of Dr. Suvira Jaiswal we are of the opinion that Gaja Lakshmī in the inception was the Goddess of fertility of the tribal people of the Vindhyan range. The tribal Śarabhas, who had undergone a process of Āryānisation, therefore, retained their originality in the Āryan garb by maintaining Lakshmī as their tutelary deity although they embraced Vaiṣnavism of the Pancharātra school. The epigraphic sources reveal that Lakshmī was associated with Viṣnu in the Gupta

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1 Bajpai, K. D. and Pandey, S. R., Malhar (1978), pp. 36-37.

2 Jaiswal, S., The Opinion and Development of Vaiṣnavaism (1967), pp. 89, 109.

period. In the sixth century A.D. when the Śarabhapurīyas embraced Vaiṣhnavism by undergoing a process of Āryānisation, they incorporated their old relic of the tribal cult of the worship of the fertility deity in the newly accepted garb of Gaja Lakshmī. Thus, while they declared themselves as 'Paramabhāgavata' in the text of their charters they embossed the emblem of Gaja Lakshmī on their seals attached to their charters. Their time honoured fertility deity now merged in the new pantheon of Vaiṣhnavism as Śrī or Pusti or Bhūvaiṣhnavī, the consort of Viṣnu. The Śarabhapurīyas are, thus, known to have worshipped that Lord (Svāmī) who holds Śrī or Lakshmī (Śrīdhara). In the Rawan plates Mahārāja Narendra is known to have worshipped Bhagavān in the form of 'Śrī-dhara' (literally, one who holds Śrī or Lakshmī). It is interesting to note that the same fertility deity was also worshipped as Bhūdevī or Bhūvaiṣhnavī as the consort of Vishnu. In the Śarabhapurīya charters we come across a verse[1] which refers to 'Bhū' as 'Vaiṣhnavī' or wife of Vishnu. Thus, the fertility deity identified with earth (Bhū) was also recognised as the consort of Vishnu. This concept led to the representation of Śrī Devi and Bhū Devī or Pusti by the two sides of Vishnu in Indian temples of the early medieval period. In Śarabhapura Bhūdevī and Śrīdevī were worshipped side by side and both were the two aspects of the same fertility deity. According to Vishnudharmottara, Bhūdevi's colour is white. She carries 'Ratna Pātra' (vessel filled with arms), 'Aushadhipātra' (vessel containing vegetables) and lotus. D. N. Sukla[2] points out that her seat should be the back of the four 'Diggajas' or elephants of the quarters. Vishnu Smriti describes her as the most vivacious deity, decorated with most precious gems.

Sunworship

Sun was considered to be identical with Vishnu from the early vedic time. In Orissa we find its earliest depiction in a sculpture of Anantagumphā[3] assigned to the first century A.D. With the ascen-

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1 Agnerapatyam prathamam suvaṛṇam
Bhuvaishnavī suryasutāscha gaṛah ।
(See lines 16-17 of the Khariar plates of Sudevarāja I, EI, IX, p. 170).

2 Sukla, D. N., Vastusastra II, p. 313 ; Vishnusmriti, III, pp. 5-6.

3 Banerjee, N. D., HI, p. 433.

dancy of the Guptas Sunworship was revived all over India.[1] In the sixth century A.D. under the strong influence of the Guptas Dharmarāja I embraced Sun worship and declared himself as 'Sahasra Rasmi Pāda Bhakta' in his Sumandala copper plate grant dated in Gupta era 250 = 570 A.D.[2] This cult of Sunworship was also prevalent in South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas in the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. It is indicated by the sculptural representation of Sun at Malhar.[3] The figure of Sun is in a standing posture. The halo round its head is plain. The tiara on the head is truncated. The deity holds two Sun-flowers in both his hands. He wears Makara Kuṇḍala in his ears. His eyes are closed, ornamentation is sparingly found in the figure. With these iconographic features the figure of Sun has to be assigned to the sixth or seventh century A.D. Its discovery at Malhar clearly proves that Sun worship was prevalent in the kingdom of Śarabhapura. From such names as Bhāskara Svāmī and Prabhākara Svāmī among the donees of the Sarangarh plates[4] of Sudevarāja I it is further revealed that Sun was a popular deity among the people of South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas.

Śaivism

While Vaiṣnavism and Sun worship gained ground in South Kośala, Śaivism was not relegated to the background. In spite of the royal patronage of Vaiṣnavism, Śaivism still continued to exercise its spiritual influence over the people of Śarabhapura in the sixth and the seventh centuries A.D. Under the Nalas Maheśvara and Mahāsena (Skanda) were the popular dieties. The Nala king Bhavadattavarman had donated the Kadambagiri,[5] which may be identified with Kadambaguha of the Ranod inscription.[6] It seems that the Śaivite Āchāryas of the Lakulisapāsupata and Mattamayura schools

1 We find mention of Sunworship in the Indore plates of Skandagupta (CIII, III, p. 81) and in several other records of the post-Gupta period.
2 Line 5 of the plate, Rajguru, S. N., IO, p. 113.
3 Bajpai, K. D. & Pandey, S. K., Malhar (1978), Pl. XXI.
4 EI, IX, pp. 281-284.
5 EI, XIX, p. 312.
6 EI, I, p. 354.

worked hard in South Kośala for the establishment of Śaivism under the patronage of the Nalas. But their activities seem to have been outweighed by the Āchāryas of the Pancharātra School who exerted great influence on Skandavarman of the Nala family and subsequently over the kings of Śarabhapura. However, Śaivism still continued to be the living faith of a considerable section of people in South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas. Although the kings of Śarabhapura were devout worshippers of Vishnu, they extended their patronage to Śaivism. We learn from the Burhikhan[1] copper plate grant that Surabala who was a contemporary of Sudevarāja I, purchased the village of Sangama, identified with Tālā, from a vaiśya of South Kośala and donated it in favour of the deity Jayeśvara Bhaṭṭāraka. The temple of Jayeśvara Bhaṭṭāraka may be identified with one of the Śiva temples of Tālā which on the stylistic ground can be assigned to the sixth or seventh century A.D. It is not wide of the mark to presume that the temple was in all probability built by Jayarāja or Jaya-Bhaṭṭāraka whose memory was perpetuated by the temple dedicated to Jayeśvara Śiva.

It is interesting to note that Kurud charter has been issued by Mahārāja Narendra from the victorious Camp at Tilakeśvara. We are inclined to identify Tilakeśvara with present Tālā and suggest that one of the two Śiva temples was probably built by Narendra and dedicated to god Tilakeśvara Śiva.

Buddhism

While Brāhmanical form of Hinduism was triumphant in South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas, Buddhism also survived as a creed of the people. 'Polomolokieli' was the great Vihāra of the Mahāyānists and it had attained celebrity as a centre of Buddhist learning due to the contributions of Nāgārjuna and Ārya Deva. Hiuen Tsang visited South Kośala in 639 A.D. while the Śarabhapurīyas were still ruling over that territory. In course of his tour in South Kośala he visited the Mohāvihāra of Polomolokieli[2] which was located at a distance of about 300 li to the South West of the capital of the

1 Vide Studies in Epigraphy, III, pp. 183-93.

2 Beal, S., Buddhist Records of the W. World (1958), Vol. IV, p. 418.

country. The pilgrim records a good deal of traditions with regard to the excavation of the Sangharāma by Sadvaharāja.[1] He also refers to the activities of Nāgārjuna in this great centre of Buddhist learning. Unfortunately, satisfactory identification of Polomolokieli is still a matter of further investigation. V. V. Mirashi suggests that Polomolokieli is identical with Bhrangāraparvata mentioned in an ancient Brāhmi inscription at Arang.[2] N. K. Sahu identified Polomolokieli or Parimalagiri with Narsinhanath-Harishankar range of hills in the district of Bolangir. Whatever the case might be it is certain that Parimalagiri was situated in the kingdom of Śarabhapura and it flourished as a Buddhist Centre of international importance. The significant image of Buddha in the Bhūmisparśamudrā located at Malhar has been assigned by us to the seventh century A.D. on the ground of iconographic features. The figure of Buddha is seated in crosslegged pose (Fig 9), his two hands indicating Bhūmisparśamudrā. The halo-round the figure is plain and the face radiates, smile and celestial bliss. It is an interesting illustration of the prevalence of Buddhism in the heart of South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas.

The aforesaid account of the religious condition of the kingdom of Śarabhapura gives us the picture of the various creeds like Vaishnavism, Śaivism, cult of Lakshmī, Sunworship and Buddhism which flourished simultaneously and exerted great influence on the princes and people of the country. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang has probably given us a biased picture of the religious condition of South Kośala when he records that the Sangharāmas were about 100 in number whereas the Deva temples were about 70. We know from a study of the Śarabhapurīya charters that the Pancharātra School of Vaishnavism had gained its strong hold over Śarabhapura by initiating the Śarabhapura-monarchs in their faith. Therefore, it goes without saying that under the patronage of the kings Vaishnavism was in its ascendancy in the kingdom of Śarabhapura while other religious creeds like Śaivism, Śaktism, Sunworship and Buddhism only continued to flourish among the interested sections of the people in the country.

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1 Ibid.

2 Beal, S., Chinese Accounts of India [Buddhist Records of W. World (1958)], IV, pp. 416-418.

Chapter Fifteen

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The Śarabhapurīya kings issued land grants to learned Brāhmaṇas in copper plate charters. But not a single temple inscription referring to their endowments is yet known to us. In the post Śarabhapurīya period we have temple inscriptions[1] of the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs and the Somavaṃśīs which reveal dated monuments of their epochs. But in respect of the Śarabhapurīya period we do not have a single inscribed image ; although we have inscribed image[2] of pre-Śarabhapurīya period in South Kośala. Archaeological excavation at Malhar has not yielded any discovery of Śarabhapurīya monument or sculpture, although a few sculptures[3] noticed on the surface at Malhar and its vicinity may be attributed to the Śarabhapurīyas.

Credit, however, goes to Dr. K. D. Bajpai[4] for the indentification of the village Sangama mentioned in the Burhikhar Copper Plate grant of Surabala with the present Tala (also called Sangama) located near the confluence of the rivers Maniari and Sivanatha in the Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh. Burhikhar Copper Plate grant[5] reveals that Surabala of the Pāṇḍava family of Mekala purchased the village Sangama from a Vaiśya called Boṭa and donated the same for the munificence of the temple of Jayeśvara Bhaṭṭāraka. Similarly, Rawan[6] plate is another epigraphic record which reveals that Mahārāja Narendra donated Ārāmaka grāma of the Manṭarāja Bhukti for the maintenance and regular worship in the temple of

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1 Vide Gandheśvara temple inscription of the time of Mahāśivagupta (IO, Vol. IV, pp. 65-66) ; Someśvara temple inscription of Gagana Śivāchārya (EI, Vol. XXIV, p. 239) ; Brahmeśvara temple inscription of Udyotakeśarī (IO, Vol. IV, pp. 244-252).

2 Proceedings of the I. H. Congress, Waltair (1953), p. 39.

3 Prāchya Pratībhā, Vol. V, No. 2, pp. 132-133.

4 JESI, Vol. VI (1979), p. 63.

5 Studies in Epigraphy, Vol. III, pp. 183-193.

6 JESI, Vol. VI (1979), p. 45.

Lord Śrīdhara Svāmīn at Vaṭapadraka. These epigraphic evidences clearly indicate that the Śarabhapurīyas constructed several temples of both the Śaivite and the Vaiṣṇavite orders. Further, we learn from Hiuen Tsang[1] that the Śarabhapurīyan king of South Koṡala greatly honoured the law of the Buddha and that there were about one hundred Sangharāmas and about seventy Deva temples in Kiao-sā-lo (Koṡala) during his visit in 639 A.D. The Chinese testimony thus corroborates the epigraphic evidences and indicate that the Śarabhapurīya Kings were great patrons of both Buddhist and Brāhmanical art and architecture. Our knowledge about the monuments and sculptures of the Śarabhapurīyan epoch is derived from some of the observations made by Dr. K. D. Bajpai and Dr. S. K. Pandey[2] as well as from our own actual field study and discovery of archaeological remains of the Mārāguḍa valley in the Kalahandi district of Orissa.

The earliest known temple of the Kingdom of Śarabhapura would be the Śaivite shrine of Tālā located near the confluence of the rivers Maniari and Sivanatha in the Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh. The South Indian campaign of Samudragupta opened the avenue for the influx of Gupta ideology into the heart of South Kośala. The Gupta temple with flat roof was the example which inspired the architect of the Śarabhapurīya kingdom to construct temples in their own country on the model of Gupta architecture. Of the two flat roofed temples of Tālā popularly called Jeṭhāni and Devarānī, only the temple of Devarānī (Figure 5) is some what existent and some of its sculptures are conspicuously significant. This was probably the temple, named as Jayeśvara Bhaṭṭāraka in the Burhikhar grant. The ruined temple of Devarānī has aided a flat roofed shrine, although the roof itself is now damaged. But when compared with the temple No. XVII of Sanchi and the Viṣnu temple of Tigawa it seems to be later than the two early Gupta temples. There is a pillared portico in this shrine. The pillars in the temple are made of several segments and they are crowned by simple domes.

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1 Beal, S., Buddhist Record of the Western World (New Edition 1958), Vol. III, p. 415.

2 Malhar (Excavation Report).

The temple is made of quartzite stone. The entrance into the Vimāna of the temple seems to compare favourably with that of the Daśāvatāra temple of Deogarh. But unlike the pyramidal elevation of Deogarh the shrine of Tālā is a flatroofed one. The ground plan is rectangular. It measures 152″ × 170″ inside the sanctum. From the style of architecture it seems to have been built in the later part of the sixth century A.D., when Jayarāja of the Śarabhapurīya family might have constructed the temple and named it as Jayeśvara Bhaṭṭāraka to perpetuate the memory of his name.

Among the sculptures of the temple a panel depicting Gaja-Lakshmī (Figure 6) is, indeed, very significant. Gaja-Lakshmī emblem is embossed on the seals attached to all the Śarabhapurīya charters. The same emblem is sculptured in a panel in the temple of Devarāni at Tālā. Lakshmī is found seated in a lotus-pose flanked by two elephants with their upraised trunks in the pose of sprinkling water on the head of the deity. In the royal seal of the Śarabhapurīyas the deity is found standing while she is found seated in the panel. Except this variation in the pose the two themes in the seal and in the panel of sculpture are identical.

Not far from Tālā at Malhar we have some sculptural remains of the Śarabhapurīyan epoch. From the same locality we have also gotas many as four copper plate grants of the Śarabhapurīyan royal house. Among the sculptural remains of Malhar a standing icon of Skanda Mātā (Figure 8) is interesting. Here the mother goddess is in a standing pose holding a peacock in her right hand. She holds the baby Skanda-Kārttikeya in her left arm. It is striking to note that the cult of Skanda-Kārttikeya was very popular in South Kośala in the fifth century A.D. under the Nalas, who had dedicated their kingdom to Maheśvara and Mahāśiva (Kārttikeya).[1] Under the Śarabhapurīyas the cult of Skanda continued to maintain its popularily in spite of the royal patronage of Vaiṣnavism. In the present icon of Skanda-Mātā in ornamentation and its nascent form she is fouud wearing only a mekhalā as ornament. The image may be assigned to the sixth century A.D.

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1 Rajaguru, S. N., IO, Vol. I, Part II, p. 107.

At Malhar we also notice an early image of Sun-god in a sthānaka pose. The deity holds two Sun-flowers in both his hand and the tiara on his head is truncated. The halo round his head is plain. The deity is found wearing a neklace round his neck. Ornaments are sparingly noticed on the body of the figure. On the basis of these features the image may be assigned to the seventh century A.D.

Kharod is another centre of architectural activity of South Kośala under the Śarabhapurīyas and the Somavaṃśīs. The temple of Kharod (Figure 7) is an excellent example of the brick tradition which was initiated in Northern India during the Gupta period. In structural design it seems to be earlier than the brick temple of Bhitargaon. The ground plan of the structure at Kharod is square. Here Gangā and Yamunā made their remarkable appearance on the door jams of the shrine. But in design, the brick temple of Kharod differs from that of Bhitargaon. At Kharod the śikhara rises in gradual ascending height in a pyramidal style whereas the Śikhara caps the sanctum at Bhitargaon.

Among the Buddhist remains of Malhar the image of this Buddha in Bhūmisparśa mudrā (Figure 9) is most striking. Here Buddha is seated in meditation with closed eyes, smiling lips, his left hand resting on the right leg of the Siddhasana and his right hand touching the earth. The halo round his head is plain and the headdress is characterised by an Uṣnisha. On the basis of these iconographic features the image may be assigned to the seventh century A.D.

Archaeological remains of the Śarabhapurīyan epoch are found scattered in the Kalahandi district of Orissa, where we have also found two copper plate grants and a few gold coins of the Śarabhapurīya Kings. The most important archaeological site in this zone is the valley of Mārāguḍa which extends from the foot of the Manikgarh hill upto a place called Lac Pol across the river Jonk, forming a part of the Supabeda plateau. The Manikgarh hill is a hillfort (Figure 19) which continued to maintain its strategic importance from very early times to the nineteenth century when it was utilised by Surendra Sāi during his fight against the British. It is quite probable that the hill fort flourished as early as the epoch of the Śarabhapurīyas in the sixth century A.D. In Chapter X of our

present work we have suggested that Śarabhapura was probably called Amaragaḍa (i.e. fort of the Amarārya) which in our opinion corrupted into Mārāguḍa. We know from the Bahmani plates of Bharatabala that in the sixth century A.D. when the Pāṇḍava family ruled over Mekala the Amaraja family ruled over South Kośala. There is no doubt that Amaraja family is identical with Amara-Ārya kūla, which was the dynastic name of the Śarabhapurīya royal house. We are of opinion that the present village of Mārāguḍa is an Apabhraṃsa of Amaragaḍa which was the Capital of the Śarabhapurīyas. It is striking to note that on the foot of Manikgarh fort there is the village called Mārāguḍa and we learnt on enquiry that from the paddy field by the side of the village was found the socalled Amgura or Amguda plates of Jayarāja. Proper excavation of the Mārāguḍa valley has not been undertaken. Department of Archaeology of the Government of Orissa did only a trial excavation and found an interesting image of Kārttikeya and broken piece of hand of an image of Vishnu holding a conch. The peasants of the locality in course of cultivation have got very interesting parts of structures of temples which are at present deposited in the nearby village called Puchipada. We have collected several sculptures like the figures of a lion and a lioness, several hero-stones of early medieval period, figure of a galloping horse of the medieval period and two interesting images of Ganeśa of an early period. All these sculptures are now deposited in the Museum of the Sambalpur University. In course of our field study we visited the Mārāguḍa valley and noticed sculptures and broken parts of temples of the early medieval period which are discussed below :

The archaeological remains which are now at Puchipada in the Mārāguḍa valley indicate that they are the broken parts of Śaivite and Vaiṣhnavite shrines. Among these ruins we notice an interesting panel of Garuḍa flanked by Śaṅkha to its left and Chakra to its right (Figure 10). The figure of Garuḍa is much effaced. However, traces of the figure give us an impression of Garuḍa with a prominent nose. The panel compares favourably with the emblems of Garuḍa, Śaṅkha and Chakra embossed on the gold coins of Mahendrāditya and Prasannamātra. In fact the sculptural representation of Garuḍa

flanked by Śaṅkha and Chakra in the Mārāguḍa valley is identical with the numismatic representation Garuḍa flanked by conch and wheel on the obverse of the coins of Prasannamātra of the Śarabhapurīya family. It seems that this panel is a part of a lintel of a temple dedicated to Vishnu, who was the presiding deity of Śarabhapura.

From the village of Mārāguḍa we have procured a stone plaque with the carving of a figure of Vishnu (Figure 17) on it, unfortunately the figure is a torso. It is a two armed figure standing on a petalled lotus. The left hand of the figure is associated with a club and the right hand is associated with a hazy object which looks like Śaṅkha. We are inclined to believe that the carving on the stone plaque represents Vishnu because the figure is found standing on lotus. Ornamentation on the figure is in its nascent form. It is very probable that the plaque belongs to the epoch of the Śarabhapurīyas, who were devout worshipper of Vishnu.

In the valley of Mārāguḍa we have also noticed an interesting icon of two armed Ganeśa (Figure 12) which was, obviously, located as a Pārśva Devatā in a Śiva temple. This figure of Ganeśa has two big ears and it is in a sitting posture. The trunk of Ganeśa is inclined towards the left side of the deity. The conspicuous absence of mouse is another significant feature which beads as to attribute the icon to the sixth or the seventh century A.D. Practically there is no ornamentation in the figure. The other image of Ganeśa is (Figure 13) its prototype.

By the side of the image of Ganeśa there is a beautiful image of Skanda Mātā in a standing pose. The mother goddess carries the baby Skanda in her left arm and the right hand is associated with a peacock. She wears a mekalā which goes round her waist. This icon is a prototype of the image of Skanda Mātā noticed at Malhar.

The two armed image of Bhūdevī (Figure 16) is an interesting example of the icon of mother goddess in the Mārāguḍa valley. The deity is seated in a cross-legged posture holding a pot of wealth in her two hands. The countenance of the figure gives as the appearance of a tribal goddess in Brāhmanical garb. There is the representation of a tree on the head of deity, thereby giving the clue that

it is the figure of a fertility deity identified with "Bhūvaishnavī" of the Śarabhapurīya record. Śrī or Lakshmī[1] is considered to be primarily a pre-Āryan deity identified with the wife of Vishnu at a later period. Our present image of fertility deity seems to symbolise this ideology.

An image of Nāga Rāja, popularly called Yogi Sundar, is yet another significant discovery in the Mārāguḍa valley. The anthropomorphic figure of the Nāga deity is seated on a coiled snake with closed eyes, his face radiating bliss of meditation. The head dress of the figure is characterised by a close fitting cap protected by a five hooded canopy of the snake over it. There are two necklaces round its neck and two Kuṇḍalas are attached to the two ears. The iconographic features indicate characteristics of the post-Gupta period. We are inclined to assign this image of the Nāga cult to the age of the Śarabhapurīyas.

Among the ruins of religious structures we notice a very interesting panel of sculptured representation of two ladies in the dancing posture—one dancing to the tune of drum and the other to the tune of flute (Figure 14). The man beating the drum by the side of the lady seems to be the Āchārya or the master with beard on his face. The lady who is about to dance is in the posture of fixing the 'Nūpur' (anklet) on her ankle. The other lady is represented as engaged in rapturous dance to the tune of the flute played by a male singer. This sculptural representation seems to reflect luxurious court life of the Śarabhapurīyas.

Last but not the least, important item in our survey of the archaeological remains of Mārāguḍa valley and its surrounding is a four armed image of Vishnu, located at Nehena, where we have also found several gold coins of Prasannamātra. Ornamentation has started its field of operation over the tiara of the image which is neither truncated nor conical. Conical, design is, however, prominent on the halo round the head which is also characterised by a circular design of three lines. The deity holds a club in the lower right hand, and a lotus in the upper right hand. The weapons of the other two hands are not clear. Infact the upper right hand is broken. The deity

1 See Chapter Fourteen of this work.

wears a garland, a sacred thread and a necklace. 'Kaustubha Maṇi' is conspicuous on the chest. Śrī and Pusti are found standing on the two sides of the deity. There iconographic features seem to betray the characteristics of a transition from the age of the Śarabhapurīyas to the age of the Pāṇḍuvamśīs. The figure may be assigned to the later part of the seventh century A.D. when the Pāṇḍuvamśis captured power from the Śarabhapurīyas and patronised the cause of Vaiṣṇavism under Tivaradeva, the obtainer of entire Kośala.

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3	20	against the Hunas, died
4	22	coins of Mahendrāditya also help
6	6	complexioned
6	7	they are brave
6	25	the saivite sculptures.
8	3	two sons, Lava and Kuśa
10	29	centuries A.D.
60	30	Kānyakubja
61	14	Ravīkīrti
68	23	Pravararāja. The Mallar plates
72	1	afore-said
73	4	gold coins[2]
95	6	of the
95	31	learned scholars
101	28	bhaṭṭa should not be
101	29	Pāṇin's Aṣtadhyāyī and Alamkāraśāstra
102	7	Mādhava
102	9	Pokhara grant
104	8	Agrarian
104	11	duty
104	13	campaigns
104	19	assumed
105	31	Rudrasvāmīn has been
107	4	bodice
107	6	which they liked
108	13	together. In the Śarabhapurīyan
108	14	such towns
110	30	his tour
114	24	resort to

Page	*Line*	*Read*
120	13	hammering
122	12	coins discovered in 1947
123	15	divides the coin into two halves.
124	26	standard as we have
126	19	centuries A.D.
127	28	centuries A.D.
129	2	Vākāṭakas
133	f.n. 2.	The Origin and Development of Vaiṣnavism (1967), pp. 89, 109.
134	24	gems),
135	25	popular deities
136	9	Burhikhar[1] copper plate
136	31	mahāvihāra
140	21	also got as
141	4	wearing a necklace
141	14	door jambs
141	31	Sunabeda plateau
143	22	which leads us

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PUNTHI PUSTAK